



Title: DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: CRITICAL
PERSPECTIVES FROM BARIA-VUNGTAU PROVINCE, VIETNAM

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DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES
FROM BARIA-VUNGTAU PROVINCE, VIETNAM

By
MINH DUC LE

A thesis submitted to the University of Bedfordshire in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

June 2016

DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES
FROM BARIA-VUNGTAU PROVINCE, VIETNAM

MINH DUC LE

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the critical perspectives of sustainable tourism from Baria-Vungtau Province, Vietnam. The research was conducted according to an interpretivist paradigm utilising of several interviewing and observational techniques. The informants included twenty-one local citizens, ten people from tourism businesses and one local leader, who were sourced from a diversity networks. The interpretations and understandings of sustainable tourism in a non-western context is an under-researched area and the results enhance knowledge of how the concept plays out in a defined cultural and political setting.

Following thematic data analysis, the interpretations of sustainable tourism by local stakeholders were found to be multidimensional with six key themes: (i) tourism with environmental and natural resource protection and conservation; (ii) tourism that optimises the usage of available resources of the region; (iii) tourism with careful land-use planning; (iv) tourism with shared economic benefits for local stakeholders; (v) tourism that focusses on both natural environment and socio-cultural aspects; and (vi) tourism that can receive more tourists and increase the investment return rate. Regarding the responses of local stakeholders towards current policies that support sustainable tourism, four main themes were identified: (i) these policies are not effective enough and there should be more

action plans; (ii) these policies should be applied more strictly; (iii) some more policies should be created; and (iv) these policies should be publicised more.

The awareness and comprehension of the impacts of sustainable tourism development by local stakeholders are classifiable into six key themes that illustrate its dualistic character: positive and negative environmental effects, economic effects, and socio-cultural effects. The positive effects are those that sustainable tourism aims to achieve, and which differentiate it from conventional tourism. The negative aspects can be minimised when sustainable tourism is implemented consistently and thoroughly. Besides, three key themes were identified in terms of the barriers encountered by local stakeholders to their participation in sustainable tourism development in the region: operational, structural and cultural. Operational barriers included lacking information about sustainable tourism, a lack of co-operation between local stakeholders, and the centralisation of public administration of tourism. Structural barriers include a lack of trained potential employees and a lack of financial resources for the local authority and local tourism businesses. Finally, cultural barriers include a lack of time to participate in tourism activities, and low levels of awareness of environmental and social issues in local communities were identified.

The study makes a contribution to knowledge by enhancing local stakeholders' understanding of sustainable tourism development in non-Western context. Four key sub-themes of where this contribution to knowledge enhancement is made are: (i) enriching the understandings of interpretations by local stakeholders of sustainable tourism development within a non-Western community; (ii) contributing to the emerging debate on the effects of sustainable tourism development in developing countries; (iii) adding to the understanding of the barriers of local stakeholders in taking part in sustainable tourism development in a developing country and (iv) political structures in Viet Nam do facilitate sustainable tourism development.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Dang Le and Hong Tuyet Le, my wife, Bich T. N. Pham, my son, Huy Duc Le, and all my family members, who have supported, inspired, and encouraged me all the way since the beginning of my studies.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe my deepest gratitude to the following people in particular:

Professor Andrew Holden, my principal supervisor and Director of Study, for his invaluable guidance, expertise, dedication and patience during the difficult process of doing my dissertation. I have been very lucky to be guided by such a good supervisor.

Dr Caroline Tie who helped with supervision and advice at various stages of the research.

The People's Committee of Baria-Vungtau Province, Vietnam, who sponsored for my research.

The people in Longhai Town and Vungtau City, Baria-Vungtau Province, Vietnam – who took part in the interviews. Thank you for your friendliness and openness which help me to collect valuable data for the study.

The following friends in Baria-Vungtau Province, Vietnam also deserve special mention; for their assistance and kindness: My Le, Manh Duc, Minh Thu, Le Hang, Thu Minh.

My father, mother, my son and my younger brother for their faith in me, moral support and patience, and my wife - for her patience, faith, and support over the last four years.

A special thanks to all those above, and also others who helped with the research. I hope that this thesis can encourage the reader to consider the importance and benefits that sustainable tourism can help to make destinations more prosperous and sustained over a long time.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Bedfordshire.

It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Name of candidate: Minh Duc Le

Signature:

Date: June 2016

Chapter One:

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the research with its context, rationale, aims and objectives. The research site of Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, Vietnam is detailed. Next, the research's conceptual and theoretical framework and research methodology are introduced. Furthermore, current policies that support sustainable tourism development in the region are mentioned. Finally, a summary of the structure of the thesis is presented.

1.1 The research context

Sustainable tourism is a relatively new concept to Vietnam, although it has been mentioned by the Government from Agenda 21 in 1997 and there have been workshops, programmes and conferences on sustainable tourism, many of which were organised with the support of UNESCO and other international organisations such as the EU, International Labour Organisation, UNWTO, PATA, ATTA, GSTC, etc., in many provinces and big cities such as Ho Chi Minh City, Ha Noi, Hue, Hoi An, Da Nang, Nha Trang, Binh Thuan, Ha Tinh, etc. The problem is that, after these events, the implementation of solutions and application of policies for sustainable tourism have not been taken seriously, thus making the concept unpopular with local stakeholders. At the time of writing, there are few specific policies for sustainable tourism development and much of population finds the concept new and are not ready to take part in sustainable tourism development in the researched site.

Sustainable tourism in Vietnam has not been considered by most tourism businesses. Most small tourism businesses do not consider sustainable tourism development necessary as they tend to focus on short-term benefits and have financial difficulties. It has been argued that tourism resources have not been protected or optimised (An, 2015). Vietnamese cities and provinces tend to focus on short-term performance by developing infrastructure such as golf courses, airports, and seaports to boost the local economy. Furthermore, many old French-style buildings have been replaced with new high buildings in the name of modernisation.

Only a few kinds of tourism are being developed with sustainable tourism in mind in Vietnam e.g. responsible tourism, ecotourism and community-based tourism. These three kinds of tourism are available in rural and remote areas and are being developed in areas such as the North-West, Centre and Mekong Delta areas of Vietnam. Only some tourist companies are involved in this development seriously, and thus not many people encounter sustainable tourism. In the researched area of this study, community-based tourism and ecotourism are focused on in terms of small-scale sustainable tourism development. Most local businesses have not been equipped with sustainable tourism principles and need more support, especially from local authorities, to achieve sustainable tourism development.

Along with the fact that the concept of sustainable tourism is relatively new to Vietnam, there is little literature on sustainable tourism in Vietnam, none of which studied critical perspectives from the researched area at the time of writing. To address this gap in literature, this research was designed to explore critical perspectives on sustainable tourism development from Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, Vietnam.

1.2 The research aim and objectives

1.2.1 Research aim

The research aim of the thesis is:

To provide critical perspectives on sustainable tourism development in Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, Vietnam.

1.2.2 Research objectives

In order to fulfil this aim, the following objectives would be achieved:

- Identify the interpretations of sustainable tourism held by local stakeholders;
- Critically evaluate the response of local stakeholders to current policies that support sustainable tourism in the area;
- Evaluate recognition of stakeholders of sustainable tourism development in the area; and
- Comprehend the barriers to develop sustainable tourism in the area

1.3 Rationale for the research study

Sustainable tourism has been a debated and contentious concept in the West for some decades (Mowforth & Munt, 2009). However, the interpretation and implementation of this notion are still relatively new to the East, especially Vietnam, a developing country. Moreover, Vietnam is trying to make tourism a sustainable industry and the government has launched policies to support the sustainable development of tourism, as stated in Law of Tourism in 2005. Among tourist destinations in Vietnam, Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province is popular with domestic and international visitors (Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province Department of Culture, Sport and Tourism, 2011a). The tourism industry in the area has developed well regarding accommodation, from about 1250 rooms in 1991 to more than 6700 in 2011 (Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province Department of Culture, Sport and Tourism, 2011b). The local government continues to stimulate investment in tourism to make the province one of Vietnam's biggest tourism destinations (Vietnamese Business Forum, 2012).

Residents decide whether to support tourism based on the benefits and the costs that the industry has brought to themselves and to their community (Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003). Sebele (2010) suggests that the participation of the local community in tourism brings more opportunities for the locals to benefit from tourism development, thus making them eager to profit sustainably. Gursoy and Rutherford (2004) also warn that active opposition to tourism may hinder or even stop tourism development. Thus, it is necessary for local stakeholders to be familiar with the concept of sustainable tourism to coordinate the development process.

Sustainable development of tourism heavily relies on the destination residents' support (Chen, 2001), goodwill and participation, as the positive attitude of residents is very important for visitor satisfaction and repeat visits (Long & Kayat, 2011). Pollution, scams and social evils (such as theft) continue to occur in tourist areas in Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, especially Vung Tau City, despite the efforts of local authorities (Bao Van Hoa, 2012; Tuoi Tre News, 2012) and this bad image has become attached to the area's tourism industry. As these problems may shock tourists (Kao *et al.*, 2008), it leads to low return visitor rate (The Economist, 2010) as well as affecting future repurchase intentions (He & Song, 2009), and creating a negative image of the area. It may lead to many problems in economic and socio-cultural aspects of the area and affect the long-term sustainable development of tourism.

Although Vietnam has developed its tourism industry for some decades, it has not attracted much attention from international experts and is still a new destination to many international tourists. As a result, not many studies have been done on the industry of the country, especially sustainable tourism. This research aims to contribute to the literature on sustainable tourism in a developing country in Southeast Asia by focusing on critical perspectives of sustainable tourism from Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, in the process creating knowledge that could be employed to make tourism more sustainable, and using criteria developed by the People's Committee of Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province (2012) focusing on the

preservation and promotion of traditional cultural values in the province, environmental protection and social order and safety.

1.4 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

This research focuses on four aspects of sustainable tourism in Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province: the interpretation of sustainable tourism by local stakeholders; the response of local stakeholders to current policies that support sustainable tourism in the area; the awareness and comprehension of stakeholders of the positive and negative effects of sustainable tourism development; and the barriers encountered by local stakeholders to their participation in sustainable tourism development. The conceptual and theoretical framework of each of these four aspects is outlined in turn.

In terms of interpretations of sustainable tourism by the local stakeholders, the concept tends to be interpreted in terms of economic, environmental and socio-cultural sustainability. These interpretations can be classified within the ‘Traditions of sustainability in tourism studies’ of Saarinen (2006), which include three primary traditions of sustainability in tourism studies on a local scale: resource-based, activity-based, and community-based traditions of sustainability. These issues will be presented and evaluated in Section 3.1 in detail.

As for the response of local stakeholders to current policies that support sustainable tourism in the area, literature on barriers to implementing policies in sustainable tourism on a local scale by Dodds (2007a; 2007b; 2010) and Dodds &

Butler (2010) is used as a framework. They have identified a number of responses of local stakeholders to the policies, such as poor administration, mistrust of government policy, and unclear lines of communication. The discussion and evaluation of this framework is outlined in Section 3.5.2.

To evaluate the awareness and comprehension of stakeholders of the positive and negative effects of sustainable tourism development, the literature on local sustainable tourism by Canavan, (2014), Miller *et al.* (2010) and Williams and Ponsford (2009) is used as a framework. Both positive and negative effects of sustainable tourism are found in three dimensions of sustainable tourism. They are classified as (i) positive environmental effects; (ii) negative environmental effects; (iii) positive economic effects; (iv) negative economic effects; (v) positive socio-cultural effects and (vi) negative socio-cultural effects. These will be evaluated in detail in Section 3.6.

In terms of the barriers encountered by local stakeholders to their participation in sustainable tourism development, the community participation barriers framework of Tosun (2000) is used as a framework. Tosun (2000) identified three major groups of obstacles to community participation in the tourism development process in developing countries: (i) operational barriers, (ii) structural barriers and (iii) cultural barriers. The discussion and evaluation of this framework is in Section 3.5.2.

1.5 Overview of Methodology

To conduct this research, an interpretive paradigm and qualitative study approach was employed. As this research primarily aims to gain a rich and in-depth understanding of the interpretations of local stakeholders towards sustainable tourism in Ba Ria-Vung Tau province, Vietnam, a qualitative approach is the most appropriate, and can help to understand and explain tourism phenomena in this study (Jennings, 2010).

Data were collected from three main groups of respondents: local citizens, who do not work in tourism industry; local tourism businesspeople; and the local authority, who are in charge of tourism industry management in the province. Purposive sampling was used to approach the first local stakeholders that fit the criteria of the research. Then snowball sampling was employed to gain access to more suitable respondents. A pilot study was conducted in July 2013 in Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province before the main fieldwork took place. After reflection on the effectiveness of the approach and revision of the methods, the main fieldwork was carried out between 1st December 2013 and 15th April 2014.

Data were collected from forty respondents including twenty-nine local citizens, ten people from tourism companies and one local leader. Participants were interviewed individually, using semi-structured interviews. Participant observation was also used to gather data. All the interviews were recorded with an electronic recorder, with permission collected via consent forms. Anonymity and confidentiality of the information collected from those respondents were ensured

by using pseudonyms in any written and/or spoken form. Thematic analysis technique was then employed to analyse the data.

1.6 The Research Site

Ba Ria-Vung Tau is an important tourism area of Vietnam, with natural resources that include 156 km of beautiful beaches, and cultural and historical sites (Pham *et al.*, 2010) (see Figure 1.1). As a result, tourism facilities have been progressively built up and five tourist areas in the province have been formed, namely Vung Tau city and the surroundings, Long Hai-Phuoc Hai, Nui Dinh Ba Ria, Binh Chau-Ho Linh, and Con Dao (see Appendix 1). These areas have recently attracted huge investments such as Ho Tram Asean Coast (4.2 billion USD), Saigon Atlantic (4.1 billion USD) and many big projects with hundreds of millions of US\$ in inward investment. The latest available statistics indicate there were 6,749 rooms, with two five-star hotels, seven four-star hotels, and fourteen three-star hotels by mid-2011 and that the region expects eight million visitors per annum (Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province Department of Culture, Sport and Tourism, 2011b). Appendices 2, 3, 4 show the annual revenue, number of tourists served by tourist companies and numbers of rooms for tourists. Between 2006 and 2010 the destination experienced rapid growth in tourism with annual revenue increasing by 77% over the period; the number of domestic tourists increasing by 52% and international tourist by 42%. The total number of rooms increased 51% while numbers of qualified rooms have increased by 55%. The increase in qualified rooms is due to the investment efforts to make the area a key tourism centre of the country.

With such a high level of tourism development, local government has developed policies that follow the national policies to support and maintain a sustainable industry, incorporating solving environmental issues relating to the inefficient use of natural resources and tourist waste, and negative social and cultural impacts such as scams and social evils. This problem-solving incorporates initiatives such as the ‘Trusted addresses’ program, which introduces reliable hotels and restaurants to tourists (Bao Ba Ria-Vung Tau, 2013a) to solve problems of scams and overpricing. Also, the ‘Green Lotus Label’, an effort to ‘protect the environment, use natural resources efficiently and preserve the country’s cultural heritage’ (Vietnam Tourism Environment, 2011, p. 1), has been implemented in the area and some hotels have qualified (Ba Ria-Vung Tau, 2013b). These policies will be presented in detail in Section 1.7.



Figure 1.1: Position of Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province

Source: Wikipedia. Available at:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ba_Ria%E2%80%93Vung_Tau_province

(accessed 31st August 2013)

1.7 Policies that support Sustainable Tourism Development in the region

Sustainable tourism has been featured in the Law of Tourism of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam since 2005 and appears in the ‘Strategy on Viet Nam’s tourism development until 2020, vision to 2030’ signed by the Prime Minister of Vietnam in 2011 (Government Portal, 2015). It was stated that the strategy is ‘to develop sustainable tourism tied to *the preservation and promotion of cultural values of the nation; to ensure landscape preservation and environmental protection; to maintain security, national defence, social order and safety*’ (*ibid.*, p.1, italics by the author). Nevertheless, sustainable tourism development in Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province has not received much attention from local government till the Decision No. 09-NQ/TU has been announced on 27th December 2017. The local authority is still working on tourism policies and some specific policies for sustainable tourism may be available in the near future.

1.7.1 Tourist Supporting Centre

The aim of this policy is to offer a centre that can supply information, introduce tourism and service products, and support tourist coming to Vung Tau City, receive requests and feedback from tourists and cooperate with other authorities to resolve issues as soon as possible to protect tourists. This policy can help increase the satisfaction of tourists and make tourism products more popular with tourists. Although information regarding tourism and service products may be available at travel agents, hotels, restaurants, tourist sites etc., this centre is best-placed to support and protect tourists as it is connected closely to the local authority.

1.7.2 Trusted tourism addresses

To deal with scams in overpricing and ensure the quality of services for the development of tourism in the province, the Provincial People's Committee of Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province has launched the 'Trusted tourism addresses' since 2007. The criteria of the programme were modified with stricter standards on October 2nd, 2014. The programme covers many sectors of tourism as discussed below.

In *accommodation*, qualified businesses must report fixed prices to the local authority; offer these prices as reported and make them visible to tourists; supply hotlines of the local authority for feedback; and make an information desk available to support tourists. In the *food and beverage* sector, qualified businesses must provide diverse food and beverages with reasonable prices; parking lots must be available; and comfortable restrooms must be available for separated genders. In the *travel agent* sector, qualified businesses must have at least three fulltime tourist guides; diverse tour programmes to serve a wide range of tourists with good service facilities; and have printed documents to introduce Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province and their own services. In the *transportation* sector, transportation businesses must provide safe and comfortable vehicles. They must serve tourists well, protect their property and buy suitable insurance. They must follow the routes that they have registered with local authority and follow the traffic laws strictly. Prices must be made visible to tourists with hotlines for feedback.

For *shopping*, shops have to supply high-quality products with clear supply sources. They have to offer after-sale services with guarantee dates to reassure tourists. In the *beauty services* sector, they must use high-quality cosmetics with clear supply sources. They have to be equipped professionally and have certificates displayed in their businesses. In the *entertainment* sector, they must be located at open sites with beautiful decoration and unique style to attract tourists. They must be safe and secure in their business activities. Furthermore, they have to pay tax and make sure that tourists are not disturbed by beggars, street vendors, etc. when using their services or products. They have to follow the labour laws for businesses with more than ten employees.

1.7.3 ‘Green Lotus Label’

This is a national programme sponsored by the EU and suggests strategies for sustainable tourism development for the Vietnamese hotel industry. The 6th workshop for the programme was organised in Vung Tau City, Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province in 2015. The label has five levels, from 1 Green Lotus to 5 Green Lotuses against various criteria (details can be found on <http://greenlotushotelvietnam.com>). Following the programme, the hotel industry in Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province has developed with investments in infrastructure and human resources. As a result, two hotels have qualified for the label, Dic Star Hotel (three Green Lotuses) and Grand-Palace Hotel (four).

Furthermore, there are some decisions, plans, strategies and tourism projects from local government to help achieve sustainable tourism in the province, such as:

- The Action Plan 28/KH-UBND dated April 24th, 2015 of Ba Ria-Vung Tau People's Committee to implement Resolution 92/NQ/CP (December 8th, 2014) on 'A number of measures to promote Vietnam's tourism development in the new period'.
- The project 'Ensuring the social order and safety at beaches and tourist sites'.
- The project 'Building aquatic accident emergency network at beaches'.
- The project 'Improving the social environment at tourist sites'.
- Strategies of removing food stalls and souvenir shops along the beaches.
- Propagandising the protection and conservation of natural environment with rubbish-collecting campaigns, planting trees, etc.
- Examining and controlling the quality of the natural environment at tourism areas.
- Prioritising ecotourism, responsible tourism, 'green' tourism and community-based tourism.
- Decision 1756/QD-UBND of Ba Ria-Vung Tau People's Committee (August 29th, 2012) regarding action plans to adopt 'the strategy for tourism development in Vietnam until 2020, with a vision to 2030' in response to Decision 2473/QD-TTg of the Prime Minister (December 30th, 2011).
- Promoting infrastructure construction and upgrade in the Back Beach of Vung Tau City, forming a centre of high-quality tourism, with security and friendliness.

- Stepping up promotion activities to encourage domestic and foreign investment in tourism development with a focus on attracting foreign investment in infrastructure at tourist sites and in high-end services.
- Encouraging the participation of private investors in protecting and restoring relics and landscapes; conserve and revive festivals, folklore activities and craft villages to serve tourism development.

These policies are being implemented and enhanced to support the sustainable development of tourism in the province to make the industry one of the spearhead economic sectors of Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province. The province aims to be a safe, friendly and civilized attraction to both domestic and international tourists.

1.8 Structure of the Thesis

There are eight chapters in this thesis (see Figure 1.2). Chapter one aims to introduce the context of the research, the research aim and objectives, the rationale for the research, the research's conceptual framework, an overview of research methodology, the research site and current policies supporting sustainable tourism development in the region. Finally, the organisation of the thesis is also outlined.

Chapters Two and Three aim to present the conceptual and theoretical framework of the research in detail with critical analysis of relevant literature. Chapter Two

discusses sustainable development; Chapter Three deals with sustainable tourism and stakeholders in sustainable tourism.

Chapter Four reviews tourism planning and policy in Vietnam by exploring the structure of tourism sector in Vietnam and Tourism planning in some provinces that emphasising sustainable tourism development.

Chapter Five discusses the methodological approaches that were used for this research. The justification of using an interpretive paradigm with the qualitative study approach and methods that were used to conduct the research are explored. Techniques to ensure trustworthiness of the study and ethical considerations are also presented.

Chapters Six and Seven present the main findings that emerged from the research. With the richness of the collected data, the findings are split into two chapters. Chapter Six explores the interpretation of sustainable tourism by local stakeholders in Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, Vietnam, and their opinions of policies supporting sustainable tourism in the region. Chapter Seven deals with their awareness and comprehension of effects of sustainable tourism development; and the barriers to local stakeholders in participating in sustainable tourism development.

Chapter Eight relates the findings of this research to the previous research of the literature review presented in Chapters Three and Four. The contribution to

knowledge, limitations of the research, and suggestions for future research are also discussed. Following this chapter are a list of references and the appendices.

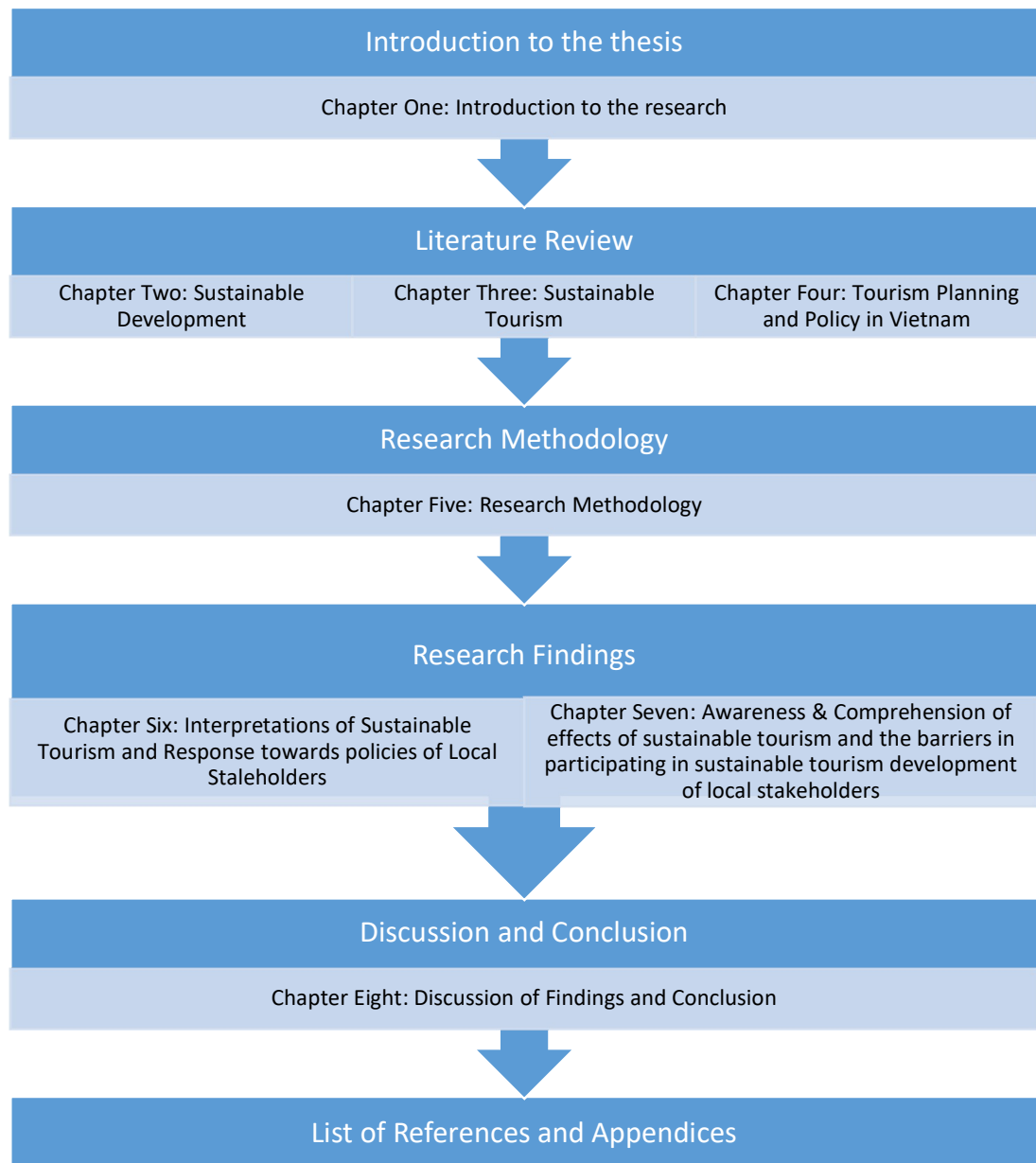


Figure 1.2: The organisation of the thesis

Chapter Two:

Sustainable Development

2.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to critically evaluate the concept of sustainable development as a basis for evaluating its application to tourism in the next chapter. The chapter is subsequently structured into sub-sections that analyse: the context of sustainable development; its definitions and interpretations; the three pillars; and the political context that sustainable development has taken place in.

2.1 Context of Sustainable Development

The concept of sustainable development attained wide political attention during the 1980s especially following the publication of the Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987). It is not a co-incidence that the concept gained a political credence following two decades of strengthening environmental awareness particularly in western countries that had emerged from the 1960s onwards, marking what Callicott (2016) refers to as the Environmental Turn. The realization that the use of nature had finite limitations both to provide resources and act as a sink for the pollution caused by economic development marked the beginning of a paradigm shift over how development would be environmentally conceptualized.

Juxtaposed to these environmental concerns were ones of how the development needs of a rapidly expanding global population could be facilitated without

destroying the natural environment that human well-being is dependent upon. Whilst anthropocentric in its concern the paradigm shift towards sustainable development is significant for its explicit link between a high-quality and functioning natural environment and human well-being. Subsequently, the sustainable development paradigm is inter-woven with aspects of human development including poverty alleviation and gender inequality (Todaro, 1997). This link is explicitly made in the context of tourism through the United Nations World Tourism Organisation's (UNWTO, 2018) ST-EP (Sustainable Tourism Eliminating Poverty) programme.

Chronologically the origins of contemporary sustainable development, one defined as being a reaction to the environmental impacts of industrialization, can be linked to the first United Nations Conference on the Human Environment hosted in Stockholm in 1972 that led to the creation of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). Along with concerns over development efforts driven by modernization theory that had failed to address social issues of poverty, economic and gender inequity, the conference was seminal for recognizing the rising concerns about the overuse of natural resources (Rist, 1997). Following the Stockholm conference, it became progressively evident that economic development could not remain in conflict with nature, leading to the creation of new joint terminologies for development policy including: 'environment and development'; 'development without destruction'; and 'environmentally sound development' (Mebratu, 1998), along with the term of eco-development that integrates cultural, social and ecological goals within development (Sagash and

Colby, 1993). Although this term was never widely utilised within the development arena within tourism the expression of 'eco-tourism' has been widely adopted, often used albeit it incorrectly, as a proxy for sustainable tourism development. A further significant evolution of the paradigm of sustainable development was in the launch of the World Conservation Strategy in 1980 by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which is considered as the first significant attempt to combined environmental conservation and economic development into one concept (Mebratu, 1998).

The response of the United Nations to these environmental concerns of economic development was to establish the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in 1983 that was composed of an independent group of 22 people from several member states representing both the developing and developed world. Their primary aim was to evaluate how the human development needs of people in the 21st century could be addressed without the degradation of the environment to the extent that it was no longer able to support economic activity. The report of the WCED published in 1987, commonly referred to as the Brundtland Report in reference to Gro Harlem Brundtland, the prime-minister of Norway who chaired the commission, marks a seminal text for sustainable development policy. Central to this report is the paradigm of 'sustainable development' which for (Robinson, 2004, p.370) is an endeavor to 'bridge the gap between environmental concerns about the increasingly evident ecological consequences of human activities and socio-political concerns about human development issues'.

Whilst environmental concerns were paramount to the re-evaluation of how economic development should take place, ethical issues of social justice, human rights and economic equity are also embedded into a re-alignment of contemporary development thinking. These pillars of sustainable development that traverse the spheres of natural environment, economy and society have led to different visions of sustainable development that originated from these three emphases: i.e. a 'conservation vision', a 'community vision', and 'economic theory' (Hardy *et al.* (2002). Whilst the conservation vision is driven by nature preservation, the 'community vision' emphasizes the role of community empowerment and decision making in sustainable development, a process that members of the community thus become embedded in and not externalized from. Critical to this process is the capacity building of local communities' knowledge and skills to aid their participation in development decision-making thus helping to ensure that they maximise opportunities to enhance their livelihoods (Keogh, 1990). In the third form, 'economic theory', emphasis is placed on continuing economic development and a trade-off with nature that does not however reduce the resource base to a level where it is unable to sustain continuing economic development and growth. It could be envisaged that this this approach would subsequently be highly technocentric and reliant upon the heavy use of alternative technologies and environmental management.

2.2 Defining and Interpreting Sustainable Development

That the term 'sustainable development' has become widely adopted as a term of policy of strategy used by governments, international lending agencies, non-

governmental organisations and the private sector suggests that it is an expression open to political interpretation. In part this stems from the often-cited definition of sustainable development taken from the Brundtland Report in which it is emphasizes as: ‘Yet in the end, sustainable development is not a fixed state of harmony, but rather a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of the investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are made consistent with future as well as present needs’ (WCED, 1987:9).

Whilst the main theme of the statement emphasizes provision for future human needs, the reference to exploitation of resources, direction of investments, orientation of technological development and institutional change offer a range of philosophical and political options for how these should be put in practice. Subsequently, sustainable development is generally considered as not only focusing on nature conservation, but also upon the process of economic development, incorporating issues of not only inter-generational equity but also intra-generational ones. The focus on progress to intra-generational equity is implicit within the first of the two key concepts defined in the report:

- *The concept of needs and subjective well-being, particularly to the poor to whom priority should be given;*
- *The idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment’s ability to meet the present and future needs. (WCED (1987, p.43)*

With these two concepts, the connections between poverty reduction, environmental improvement and social equitability are highlighted through sustainable economic growth. Thus, sustainable economic growth must ensure not only the alleviation of poverty by meeting basic needs and improved quality of life but also protect and enhance the quality of the environment.

Since the Brundtland Report, a plethora of definitions and interpretations have been generated of sustainable development. By the early 1990s Holmberg (1994) had identified more than eighty definitions and by the end of the last century this number had risen to nearly 200 (Parkin, 2000) whilst Songe (2008) estimated that over 2000 definitions of sustainability and sustainable development were in existence. A thematic analysis of many of these definitions was undertaken by Elliot (2009) who identified certain common themes as shown in Table 2.1:

The emphasis of this thematic analysis replicates the centrality of Brundtland's recommendations concerning the conservation of nature to ensure that development can be sustained into the future and subsequently the provision of livelihood opportunities. Most people would probably empathise with these statements but where the discussions of sustainable development in achieving its goals are deficient relate to the identification of the most suitable framework of political economy to achieve this (Moisey and McCool, 2001; Daly, 1996; Goldin & Winters, 1995; Holmberg, 1994; Tryzna, 1995).

Table 2.1: Thematic analysis of sustainable development definitions

(Elliott, 2009, p.119)

A better quality of life for everyone now and for future generations to come.

The net productivity of biomass maintained over decades to centuries.

International resource development that is socially desirable, economically viable, culturally appropriate, and ecologically sustainable.

Non-declining per capita utility.

The process of improving the living conditions of the poorer majority of mankind while avoiding the destruction of natural and living resources, so that increases of production and improvements in living conditions can be sustained in the longer term.

The amount of consumption that can be sustained indefinitely without degrading capital stocks, including natural capital stocks.

Thus, whilst sustainable development may at first appear as a radical departure from the process of industrialization that has dominated the world for over two centuries it easy to entwine it with the predominant political hegemony of development paradigms. Thus, if neo-liberalism is favoured by international agencies and passed into government policy the focus becomes one of achieving sustainable development within a neo-liberal paradigm. Yet the *caveat* is that if neo-liberalism fails to deliver sustainable development against set criteria, e.g. the Millennium Development Goals or Sustainable Development Goals, the existing paradigm must be altered or alternative ones found.

This political dimension of sustainable development is emphasized by accusation of it being little more than a western-centric paradigm that serves the interest of the most economically advanced countries, ‘a discussion framed in the West and imposed on the ‘Rest’’ (Mowforth and Munt, 2009, p.49). A western-centric dominance is also inferred by Wood (1993) who states that sustainable development has been supported by international agencies because of its relationship to economic aspects of development, i.e. within this kind of development economic growth continues to be favoured and not rejected. In the opinion of Daly (1996) the ambiguity of the concept also helps the interests of globally powerful institutions and governments, as having a consensus on a vague concept rather than disagreement over a sharply defined one, represent a good political strategy.

2.3 Pillars of Sustainable Development

Since its appearance in the Brundtland Report, sustainable development has progressively established itself as the core constituent of environmental discourse, leading to wide use with differing interpretations. For Porritt (2007) an important factor underpinning the confusion over the concept is that ‘sustainable development’ and ‘sustainability’ are frequently but incorrectly used interchangeably as meaning the same thing. Thus individuals, stakeholders and social groups define, interpret and implement it differently and often refer it as a ‘balanced’ or ‘wise’ use of resources (Lu & Nepal, 2009). A significant problem of the term ‘sustainable development’ is its vagueness (Daly, 1996; Robinson,

2004), as there is no agreement regarding what exactly is to be sustained. Accordingly, it tends to mean very different things to different parties with its meaning reflecting the philosophical and political position of those defining it (Robinson, 2004) including supranational and transnational organisations, INGOs, socio-environmental organisations, social classes and so on (Robinson, 2004; Mowforth & Munt, 2009).

As there is no agreement on what exactly should be sustained, the term ‘sustainable development’ is conceptually confused and not unified sometimes referring to the resource base and sometimes to the livelihoods derived from it (Redclift, 1987; Redclift, 2004). Some experts focus on sustaining levels of production, while others refer to sustaining levels of consumption. The difference is significant, since growth at the international level has become unsustainable, mostly because of patterns of overconsumption in the advanced industrial nations. The problem is that most policies for sustainable development tend to be production-oriented, not consumption-oriented.

Whilst there exist many definitions of sustainable development most of them: encompass the idea that there are three interdependent pillars of sustainable development: environmental, economic and social’ (Elliott.2006, p.11). UNEP and the UNWTO (2005) define these pillars as economic sustainability, social sustainability and environmental sustainability and recognize their interdependence and mutuality as being integral to the success of Agenda 21 that evolved from the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 (UENP, 1992). Within sustainable

development, the interdependence of the three pillars is emphasized by their potential to be mutually re-enforcing but also be in competition with each other, for example the historical path of economic development has traditionally treated nature in an instrumental fashion and as an unlimited resource. Achieving an appropriate balance for sustainable development will inevitably mean some degree of trade-off between these three components. Subsequently, the what and who of defining sustainable development is integral to evaluating its success. The three pillars of sustainable development have been linked into a conceptual diagram of three spheres by Rodriguez *et al.* (2002).

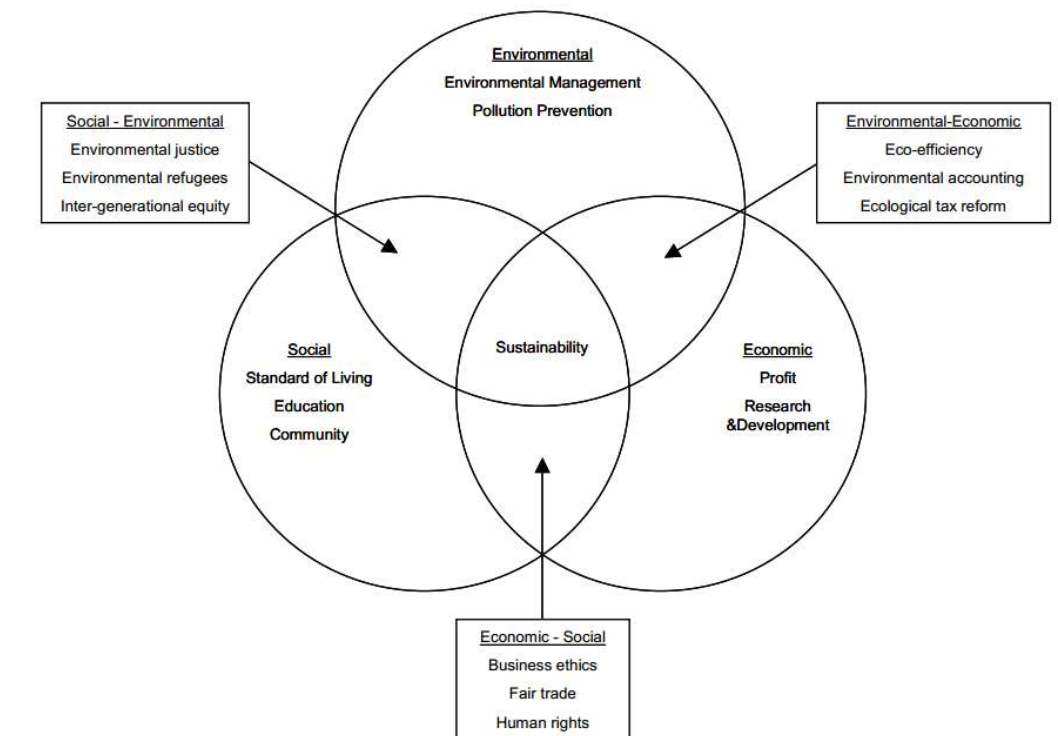


Figure 2.1: The Three Spheres of Sustainability (Rodriguez *et al.*, 2002, p.8)

The three spheres represent the pillars of sustainability and demonstrate both their independence and inter-dependency. The environmental sphere of the model emphasises a techno-centric approach to nature conservation based upon environmental policy and management that addresses existing problems and avoids future ones. However, this process is not independent of the social and economic spheres and the areas of overlap are integral in their importance to achieving sustainable development. Thus, the environmental and social spheres interlink and generate challenges and issues of environmental justice, environmental refugees and inter-generational equity, all of which need to be addressed to meet the wider aims of sustainable development. All of these issues determine aspects of the standard of living, education, concepts and structures of community that are integral to the human development component of sustainable development.

The inter-section of the environmental and economic spheres highlights necessary reforms to the existing economic system if sustainable development is to be achieved. At a most general level this necessitates the integration of environmental costs into the market system through reforms to the taxation and accounting systems to maximise the eco-efficiency of resources usage, i.e. economic and financial systems and processes that ensure natural capital is not damaged in an unsustainable way through economic development. When the costs of development's destruction are not considered, the environment can hardly be protected; neither can development occur upon a resource base that is deteriorating environmentally. The inter-section of the economic and social

spheres emphasises ethical issues of business and its role in society. Subsequently, whilst profit is essential to business it also has a social duty to behave in an ethical way, for example through fair trade programmes that help to promote levels of economic equity within the capitalist system and help arrest exploitation.

Whilst the work of Rodriguez et al (2008) gives a conceptual clarity to the intersections of the economic, environmental and social spheres it is important to recognise the influence of consumption and production on sustainable development as emphasised by Rogers et al. (2008). Thus, as emphasized in the economic sphere it is essential that profits are placed into the research and development of clean and environmentally beneficial or at least environmentally neutral technologies for economic growth to be sustained without the destruction of the natural resource base. Similarly, our attitudes and behavior as consumers must reflect a recognition of environmental limits, which necessitates an acceptance of paying market prices that reflect true environmental costs and a stronger consumer ethic to change behavior that is known to have negative environmental impacts.

2.4 The Political Context

The concept of sustainable development has evolved in the context of a dominant global paradigm of neo-liberalism that has been advocated by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank as means to generate global economic growth and combat poverty. Neo-liberalism has had a significant impact on many less-developed countries in term of a structural re-adjustment of their economies and a

need to orientate economic production towards goods that will sell in global markets rather than domestic markets e.g. agricultural products that are orientated towards western consumption rather than the domestic one. Structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) of national economies have also necessitated a reduction of state involvement in economic activity and the privatisation of state services.

Within neo-liberal theory through the removal of state ownership of resources and the introduction of wage suppression in the public sector a country should become more attractive to external investors leading to increased levels of economic growth (Willis, 2005). This market orientation has led to criticisms that that neoliberalism undermines the ability of developing countries to attain sustainable development as it emphasises promoting the interests of the market at the expense of social and environmental development (Haque, 1999).

The usage of SAP's in LDCs during the 1980s and 1990s has raised high levels of controversy over their economic and social impacts and criticized for their ignorance and lack of acknowledgement of cultural differences between western countries and many LDCs (Power, 2005). This has led to many governments pursuing policies that are not determined within the country but designed and imposed from external sources (Mowforth and Munt (2009). In an analysis of the effects on the imposition of SAPs in African countries Maathai (2009) observes that the most significant negative impacts have been observed by the poor as results of the economic cuts to basic infrastructure services and development, including health and education.

Thus, various connections between neoliberalism, environmental change and the politics of sustainability need to be considered, including the evaluation of the institutional, political, social and material bases for sustainability (Bramwell & Lane, 2005). This includes the spatial dimensions of sustainability and where it is aiming to meet its objectives, i.e. is sustainable development geared to meeting local or global objectives for instance and how these are taken into account when devising sustainable policy.

Although there is wide acceptance of the concept and idea of sustainable development by governments, businesses and civil society, and good progress has been made on the development of sustainable development metrics, the ‘how to’ of implementing sustainable development has not received enough attention (Ndum & Gilean, 2012). Unsustainable trends are still common, for example increasing emissions of global greenhouse gas emissions beside excessive natural usage and environmental pollution. There remains little progress in implementing programs and policies to eliminate extreme poverty and hunger and it remains a challenge of how to suitably integrate the three pillars of economic and social development with environmental improvements (Moyo, 2009). Thirty years on from Brundtland it would seem that sustainable development is a highly complex phenomenon to actually implement and it will take substantial efforts of negotiation between different stakeholders to produce workable strategies. In the tourism sector this is particularly the case as a plurality of stakeholders are involved within the system.

International organisations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) have added sustainable development into their operations and governing authorisation. The World Bank (2007) affirms a commitment to ‘sustainable globalization’ that ensures not only the overcoming of poverty and the enhancement of economic growth with care for the environment, but also the generation of livelihood opportunities. They recognise sustainable development as a type of growth that must be not only inclusive but also friendly to the environment and build shared prosperity both now and into the future. Resources must subsequently be used efficiently and planned to deliver both immediate and long-term benefits for communities.

Whilst there would be likely to be little disagreement about the very broad statements and objectives of what sustainable development hopes to achieve the mechanisms for delivering this are more contentious and involve issues of political hegemony and external control. For example, whilst Agenda 21 may prioritise ‘bottom-up’ decision-making and local community determination this is very difficult to achieve within a wider neo-liberal framework where individual nation’s resources are forced to be put into the global market place by the World Bank and IMF as a condition for the continuation of state loans. This is a potentially significant problem for the governments and the tourist industries of LDCs, where a nation's environmental resources may be sold to multinational organisations which besides making the implementation of government controls difficult may also reduce potential livelihood opportunities as a consequence of high levels of economic leakages.

Whilst the IMF (2014) commits to ‘sustainable economic growth’ and ‘reducing poverty’ and policy has been made for progression to a greener economy through the United Nations Environment Programme, there exist many disputes over environmental issues and social equity. One such concern related to the way in which production tends to flow geographically and economically to where labour is low-cost and most easily exploitable and environmental costs are low. For many poorer countries this makes the enactment of environment legislation difficult in case it is seen as a barrier to inward investment who may subsequently choose to invest in another country. Thus, the issue of international trade was considered a key component of sustainable development by both the Rio and Johannesburg conferences. An explicit link between sustainable development and disciplined trade opening was established to make sure that the development of new markets comes with environmental and social objectives (WTO, 2011).

2.5 Thirty years after Brundtland

Thirty years after the publication of the Brundtland Report the influence of sustainable development on policy remains to have considerable influence. Its relevance to contemporary global development policy is emphasized through the UN (2015) formulation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that set targets for development during the period 2015-2030 as shown in Table 2.2.

These seventeen goals represent the three pillars of sustainable development. Five of the list items focus on economic issues (1, 2, 3, 8, and 12). Environmental issues are mentioned in four goals (6, 13, 14, and 15). Social issues seem to be

prioritised as they are mentioned in nine goals (4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 16 and 17). Finally, six out of these nine goals focus on equity. Goal 6 not only focuses on environmental issues but also on social issues of equity between genders, generations, within and between countries. These goals are set to be met by 2030 and will require substantial effort from leaders and decision-makers to achieve them.

According to the United Nations (ibid) these goals can be considered as worldwide consensus to guide sustainable development up to 2030. Within these goals, sustainable development is committed to in its three dimensions (economic, social and environmental) in a balanced and integrated manner. The UN (2015, p.6) state this: ‘will also build upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seek to address their unfinished business.’

Alongside the SDGs a second major initiative from the United Nations in transforming the global economy into one which is environmentally balanced and can facilitate sustainable development is the ‘green economy’. Although not a radical political manifesto for revolutionary change, this UNEP initiative represents a pragmatic agenda for the ‘greening’ of economic development, calling for two percent of global GDP to be ring-fenced to green ten central sectors of the economy and to encourage public and private capital investment into a low-carbon and resource-efficient path. This approach is summarized in their definition of a Green Economy as: ‘one that results in improved human well-

being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities.’ UNEP (2011:9)

Table 2.2: Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2015, p.18)

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (in line with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change)
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

The green economy concept, which ‘does not replace sustainable development’ (UNEP, 2011, p.2) but is related closely to it, is one that results ‘in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities’ UNEP (2011, p.1). Thus, a green economy can be considered one that is resource efficient, socially inclusive and low carbon. As set out by OECD (2011) and UNEP (2011) it is a new economic paradigm but similar to sustainable development as it is implied that material wealth does not necessarily have to be obtained at the expense of increased environmental risks.

The concept has been widely accepted within a very short period of time, unlike its predecessor (‘sustainable development’), which as discussed has been subject to widespread misappropriation and confusion (Fien & Guevara, 2013). Three dimensions to a green economy have been identified (*ibid.*, pp.256-257):

1. ‘Widespread respect for, and costing of, ecosystem services’ with the aim of nature conservation, so that we are not ‘mortgaging the future of human society’;
2. The dematerialisation of agricultural and industrial processes with the aim of reducing the energy flows and natural resource usage through the economy which should reduce the rate of resource depletion and lessen pollution; and
3. ‘An insistence on social equity and inclusion through the development of clean and decent jobs’.

These three dimensions focus on the protection of environment and social equity during the process of development, very similar to the goals of sustainable

development. Emphasis is placed upon controlling the use of natural resources and energy and reducing waste and toxins discharged into the environment thus saving resources and energy for future generations and reducing pollution which helps support sustainable development. The focus on social equity resonates with the concept of intra-generational equity that is integral to the concept of sustainable development. Emphasis is also placed on the quality of livelihood opportunity with an emphasis on clean and decent employment that supports the conservation of nature and the ecological commons. Subsequently, within the green economy and similar to sustainable development, intra-generational and inter-generational benefits are considered. The long-termism of a paradigm shift away from a brown to green economy is emphasised by Fien and Guevara (2013, p.262) who understand it not only as a short-term solution to the current global crisis but also as a long-term strategy for sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

The emphasis of economic growth within the green economy shifts the emphasis away from arriving at an end state and focusing more on the process of where development is aiming to arrive, for example economic equity and social justice vis-à-vis mass consumerism. This process thus raises debate and questions over the type of growth and development we want and the trade-offs we are prepared to permit. Identified a key economic sector by UNEP (2011) tourism is understood to have an important role to play in a sustainable future. This call for a paradigm shift toward a green economy symbolizes the growth in awareness of the limitations of post-Industrial Revolution economic development and the

heightened insecurities of the global economic model as highlighted through the global financial and economic crash of 2008. It also demonstrates a collective anxiety over how development is adversely affecting environmental quality both now and into the future.

Nevertheless, there are concerns from several developing countries that the green economy will be a substitute for sustainable development. Whilst this concept is not articulated or defined clearly it embraces the notion that the unification of tackling economic development and environmental concerns will be at the expense of excluding social equity. Certainly, within the history of sustainable development it seems that intra-generational equity has received relatively little reflection. This argument will continue and could encourage a revival of sustainable equity issues, led mostly by developing countries (Chasek *et al.*, 2010).

2.5 Conclusion

The concept of ‘sustainable development’ gradually became popular and is embedded in policies and strategies of many international organisations after the Brundtland report (WCED, 1987). To satisfy the overarching aims of sustainable development as defined by Brundtland and many other commentators afterwards requires that environmental sustainability, economic sustainability and social sustainability are simultaneously achieved. Nonetheless, due to the vagueness of the WCED definition of sustainable development, there exists a series of definitions and interpretations. Most of the effort at defining and interpreting the

concept is influenced by the fundamental doctrines of that particular group or organisation, making it influential to philosophical and political doctrines. The difficulties of finding common agreement amongst stakeholders of defining the concept, never mind how to interpret its definition, demonstrated that sustainable development is a complex and multi-domain issue. Subsequently in an attempt to develop our understanding of the concept and achieve a sustainable world, it is a prerequisite to strengthen 'the logical coherency within the concept by overcoming the influence of institutional and group interest' (Mebratu, 1998, p.26).

Although sustainable development is widely accepted by governments, businesses, and civil society, and progress on sustainable development metrics is good, unsustainable trends are still common as a result of a lack of suitable policies. To support sustainable development, the United Nations have advocated the move to a green economy that reflects the pillars of sustainable development, i.e. focusing on the protection of the natural environment and the assurance of social equity during the process of economic development, characterised by being resource efficient, socially inclusive and low carbon. The move towards a global model of sustainable development has also been reinforced through the decree of the Sustainable Development Goals set to cover the period of 2015-2030 have been introduced by the UN (2015). With more specific goals and a particular period of time in which to achieve them, the concept can become clearer and there will be more suitable policies and strategies to implement it.

As sustainable development needs the participation of all organisations, countries, and individuals all over the world, it can be considered at one of the most difficult stages of development. The problem is, although sustainable development is considered a global or national issue (Mowforth & Munt, 2009), it has been implemented in some areas and not others. This multi-dimensional balancing act requires a number of possible 'win-win' situations between the three pillars by making choices between conflicting objectives, which is itself highly complex. For instance, it will be difficult to sustain full employment and growing revenue from the exploitation of natural resources while extensively protecting biodiversity. Also, trade-offs have to be made both within and between several different levels, e.g. household, community, provincial, national, and global. Thus, achieving sustainable development entails appropriate judgement by leaders or decision-makers with suitable strategies and policies that are generated to address specific issues for particular areas. It requires a long-term vision that balances economic, environmental and social objectives in such a way that not only the needs of the present but those of the future as well.

Chapter Three:

Sustainable Tourism

3.0 Introduction

The following analysis highlights and critically examines the concept of sustainable tourism. It presents the context of the emergence of the ‘sustainable tourism’ in response to the negative impacts of mass tourism and the influence of sustainable development. The chapter continues to critically analyse the concept of sustainable tourism, including its limitations and challenges to its implementation. This chapter also discusses stakeholders and their issues in sustainable tourism development.

3.1 The emergence of Sustainable Tourism concept and its definitions

The emergence of the concept of ‘sustainable tourism’ and the closely allied theme of ‘sustainable tourism development’ can be understood as a response within the tourism sector to a paradigm shift towards sustainable development within the global context. It may also be understood as a response or reaction to the negative impacts of mass tourism, which as Honey (2008) points out using the terminology of sustainable development, has failed to effectively benefit the triple bottom line of environment, economy and society in many destinations.

Similar to sustainable development, there are numerous definitions of sustainable tourism as shown in Table 3.1. As Lim and Cooper (2009, p. 90) observes: ‘The

concept of sustainable tourism has been the object of numerous definitions which have repeatedly been criticized as ambiguous, vague, sectorial, too conceptual, and prone to create confusion by linking it exclusively to environmental issues'. This latter observation of an over concentration on environmental issues at the expense of the economic and social pillars of sustainable tourism development has a resonance with criticisms that have been made of definitions of sustainable development that was alluded to in the previous chapter. However, whilst there exists disagreement over the components of the concept of sustainable tourism and how to interpret it in terms of policy and practice there is nevertheless a consensus that it is an approach to tourism development and not a type of tourism.

The environmental emphasis referred to by Lim and Cooper (*ibid.*) is evident within the definitions in Table 3.1 which stress environmental limits and resource limitations. However, these definitions do also make explicit links to the interaction of the natural environment with the pillars of economic and social sustainability. However, with the exception of the definition from Tourism Concern (1992) that refers to trying to ensure that 'people must have an equitable share in the economic benefits of tourism', the issue of intra-generational equity is ignored whilst the long-termism of inter-generational equity is emphasised directly or indirectly within all the definitions.

This lack of reference to intra-generational equity has similarly been often overlooked in definitions of sustainable development, not least perhaps because its recognition presents a threat to existing economic interests, structures and

practices. Subsequently, the definitions of sustainable tourism often replicate the ambiguities of sustainable development leading Farsari *et al.* (2007) to comment that it is a flexible and ambiguous concept that can facilitate diverse perceptions and be understood differently by various stakeholders. Similarly, Mowforth and Munt (1998:122) remark: “.... If it [sustainable tourism] remains a ‘buzzword’ which can be so widely interpreted that people of very different outlooks on a given issue can use it to support their cause, then it will suffer the same distortions to which older-established words such as ‘freedom’ and ‘democracy’ are subjected”. The lack of progress on removing the ambiguities of sustainable tourism is alluded to eleven years later in the second edition of their book where in reference to sustainable tourism, Mowforth and Munt (2009:100) comment that there remains: ‘no unarguable, comprehensive and all-encompassing definition that is accepted by all’. These inherent ambiguities leave the issue of interpretation open to the political philosophies of those who define sustainability and claim ownership of it.

The ambiguousness of its parent concept of sustainable development when transferred to tourism permits various interpretations that have manifested themselves in different ways. Attempting to attain an overview of how sustainable tourism has been interpreted Saarinen (2006), identifies three primary traditions: the resource-based, activity-based and community-based. In the ‘resource-based’ tradition, the focus of sustainability is primarily environmental, emphasising the requirement for nature conservation and the mitigation and preservation of the negative environmental impacts of tourism. Thus, in order to sustain the economic

Table 3.1: Sample definitions of sustainable tourism

‘Sustainable tourism development can be thought of as meeting the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future [...] leading to management of all resources in such a way that we can fulfill economic, social and aesthetic needs while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems.’ (Inskip, 1991, p.15)

‘Sustainable tourism is a positive approach intended to reduce tensions and friction created by the complex interactions between the tourism industry, visitors, the environment and the communities which are host to holiday makers. It is an approach which involves working for the long-term viability and quality of both natural and human resources. It is not anti-growth, but it acknowledges that there are limits to growth.’ (Bramwell & Lane 1993, p.2)

‘Tourism and associated infrastructures that, both now and in the future: operate within natural capacities for the regeneration and future productivity of natural resources; recognise the contribution that people and communities, customs and lifestyles, make to the tourism experience; accept that these people must have an equitable share in the economic benefits of tourism; are guided by the wishes of local people and communities in the host areas.’ (Tourism Concern, 1992, p.3)

‘Sustainable tourism sees tourism within destination areas as a triangular relationship between host areas and their habitats and peoples, holidaymakers, and the tourism industry. Sustainable tourism aims to reconcile the tensions between the three partners in the triangle, and keep the equilibrium in the long term.’ (Lane, 1994, p.102)

‘To be sustainable (tourism) requires the establishment of an industry which includes consideration of the long-term effects of economic activity in relation to resources and, therefore, concerns for the twin needs of this and future generations.’ (Curry & Morvaridi, 1992, p.131)

Tourism which meets the needs of the present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems (WTTC, 1995).

growth of the industry its stakeholders have to re-consider their position relative to nature and move away from an instrumental approach that considers it as an inexhaustible resource.

In the 'activity-based' tradition, the approach to sustainable development is skewed towards the tourism-centric focusing primarily on the requirements of tourism as an economic sector. This tradition concentrates more on the industry than the resource-based tradition and can be understood as a dynamic model of sustainable tourism where the limits to growth are defined by the types of tourism activities that have been developed within the destination space. Thus, although conserving resources that the tourism industry requires to expand is a condition of sustainability, different types of tourism activities have varying limits. Also, if the resource capacity for one type of activity is reached the industry can continue to expand and diversify into other types of tourism where resource capacity exists.

The third tradition, the 'community-based', supports the contribution of a plurality of stakeholders from the local community in decision-making for development, so can understood as being embodied in participatory approaches. In this model the limits to growth or limits of acceptable change of tourism should be defined by the 'community' emphasizing indigenous values and knowledge. Similarly, the goals of the use of tourism for sustainable development should be defined by consensus amongst the community stakeholders. Nevertheless, this approach has to address some of the problems that are inherent to the concept of 'community'. Within a community there are typically diverse groups with differing priorities

over the expected outcomes of tourism, but they are not typically all equally empowered to engage in the negotiation process (Akama, 1996). Therefore, to help guarantee an equality of voice there may be a requirement for capacity building to ensure people have the necessary skills to permit participation in the development process.

Despite criticisms over the confusion of meaning and interpretation of sustainable tourism few would dispute that an aim of sustainable tourism is to conserve destination resources for future use by other generations, both in terms of offering economic opportunities for local people and also for future generations to enjoy nature as travellers (Fennell, 2003, Buckley, 2012). Whilst this may not now seem a radical aim or goal, pre-Brundtland it would likely to have seen an unnecessary comment in the context of tourism, which apart from one or two dissenting voices generally enjoyed an image as a smokeless industry and one that subsequently did not necessitate planning for. Certainly, the idea of having to look to the future and notions of environmental limits would have been seen by the majority of people as strange conceptions. An associated aim of sustainable tourism must be to improve the quality of environment for local residents to make it a healthier place to live.

Nor is there any single transferable blue print for tourism as each destination will have its own challenges, its own nature, economic structures and cultural interpretations of both the environment and aims of development. Subsequently, the special character of each and every tourism destination leads to uniqueness not

only ‘in terms of its environmental, political, economic, and socio-cultural characteristics’ but also ‘in terms of the scale, scope, nature, and stage of development of its tourism sectors’ (Sharpley, 2009, p.77). There exists a consequent need to define and plan for sustainable tourism on an individual basis (Manning, 1999).

The pillars of sustainable development, the environmental, economic and social are reflected in the definitions of sustainable tourism included in Table 3.1 and for Ayuso (2007) specific strategies, including planning processes based on the three aspects, are required. If any aspect is omitted, strategies may not be successful as these aspects are interrelated as they are for sustainable development as was demonstrated in Rodriguez’s et al. (2002) spherical model for sustainability presented in Figure 2.1. Furthermore, the issue of implementing strategies with the support of the relevant bodies is also crucial, including the acknowledgement and participation of the local community without which strategies can fail or be extremely hard to fulfill.

The quality of natural environment typically plays the most important role in the recreational tourism industry both to attract tourists and provide resources for it and thus, ‘the concept of sustainable development would appear to have a strong resonance with tourism’ (Holden, 2010, p.338). In undeveloped areas with minimal infrastructure, where it is still not easy to access markets, tourism may be the most appropriate and, in some cases, only choice for growth. Nevertheless, ‘appropriateness’ remains a value judgment concept and not a fixed entity, with

the potential to create an ‘insider’ perspective against an ‘outsider’ one (Easterly, 2006). Butler (1998) also argues that sustainable tourism cannot be understood separately from the cultural value systems of the settings where it is developed. Similar to sustainable development, at a global level sustainable tourism has roots in hegemonic doctrine (Holden, 2010), i.e. defined in the West but implemented in the rest of the globe (Mowforth and Munt, 2009).

Thus, similar to sustainable development, sustainable tourism will inevitably involve trade-offs between the three pillars and value judgments made about the priorities and importance of economic, social and environmental goals. Thus, at different spatial levels sustainable tourism will rely on technocentric mechanisms, including green technologies and environmental management that will permit the maximization of economic and social benefit from the use of the environment as a resource with minimal environmental impact. It is highly unlikely that at a destination level than any community that is in need of economic development is likely to refute livelihood opportunities. Thus, sustainable development may in many manifestations represent little more than tweaks to the existing model of economic development. Those ‘tweak’ refer to improving environmental management; enhancing economic opportunities for all members of a community especially the most economically disadvantaged; and ensuring that the social impacts of tourism are restricted to a level that does not produce a consensus of fear of a loss of culture and the interpreting of tourism as an economic activity that it not morally and socially good for a community.

Furthermore, the distinction between “sustainable tourism” (i.e. tourism that is sustainable) and “sustainable tourism development” (i.e. tourism that contribute to sustain development) should also be critically clarified. Hunter (1995) stated that sustainable tourism development is the “tourism’s contribution to” sustainable development and offer two alternative conceptual models of sustainable tourism development and sustainable development relationship: the total immersion, which is expected for sustainable tourism development, and the partial immersion which may happen for sustainable tourism. As Frederico (2003) suggested, a new approach to sustainable tourism development in developing countries should be to both endeavour to diminish local environmental impacts and to offer greater priority to community participation and poverty reduction, which can help to solve social and economic issues of sustainable development.

Different from sustainable tourism, four pillars that make up sustainable tourism development were identified as the results of some tourism researches (McVey, 1993; Sharpley, 2000; Velikova, 2001; McKercher, 2003):

- (1) Economic sustainability: Tourism is lucrative in not only the instant but also long term and sustains growth rates at manageable levels. To do this it is necessary to promote tourism and control carrying capacities at the same time.
- (2) Environmental sustainability: Tourism has to support the maintenance of biological diversity as well as environmental resources. It has to be carefully planned on the capacity of the natural and built environments so that tourism does not damage the environment.

(3) Social sustainability: Tourism support local people to increase their control over their lives and local identity. The industry also helps communities to absorb increasing tourist arrivals without harmfully affecting or damaging indigenous culture.

(4) Local sustainability: Levels of local involvement have been much increased in the development of tourism, and the industry benefits local communities.

In brief, sustainable tourism development is a pathway that any forms of tourism, should follow in order to be compatible with the principles of sustainable development. Therefore, sustainable tourism development is not a specific form of tourism can be guidelines and management practices so that tourism can be part of sustainable development.

3.2 Aims and Principles of Sustainable Tourism

While some commentators advocate the use of alternative forms of tourism to replace mass tourism, Sadler (2004) states that the lack of an informed sustainable approach to the development of alternative forms of tourism considered to be more sustainable, typically environmentally, may lead to more serious environmental damage. Such concerns were alluded to in the context of ecotourism by Wheeler (2005) who foresees the dangers of ecotourism acting as a trail-blazer for mass tourism in some of the earth's most bio-diverse ecosystems in the absence of attentive environmental planning and management. These dangers were similarly alluded to by Sharpley (2000) who observed that all tourists may be considered as mass tourists if they are a part of what becomes a mass leisure phenomenon regardless of its title.

Thus, in establishing sustainable tourism there is a need to define its aims and principles to help establish what it hopes to achieve and to ensure that the advent of mass consumption in a particular place either does not occur or occurs in such a way that it does not compromise or threaten the pillars of sustainability.

Subsequently, numerous sets of aims and principles for sustainable tourism have been proposed in the academic and policy literature to establish a framework for sustainable tourism (see Bramwell and Henry, 1996; Corodeanu and Bedrule-Grigoruta, 2007; Eber, 1992; The International Scientific Council for Island Development, 1995; and the United Nations, 2001). The use of aims and principles is that they can be used to develop indicators for sustainable tourism relating to assess aspects that include levels of local community involvement, the sustainable use of resources, economic equity, social impacts, and levels of research and investment into sustainable tourism (Farsari, 2000). As the recognized international agency for tourism the UNWTO's (2004) have defined sustainable tourism development according to six key aims, to:

(1) Maximise tourist satisfaction. The emphasis is focused on the maximization of tourist satisfaction with an aim of stimulating economic development.

Alongside environmental sustainability for the UNWTO (ibid.) to achieve this, it is necessary to resolve any conflict between hosts and tourists, which emphasizes the need for stakeholder participation in the development process.

(2) Ensure the optimal use of environmental resources, including the balancing of the protection of natural resources with economic needs and considerations.

This requires the efficient use of environmental resources for tourism, e.g. water, land and power especially in regions where they are scarce.

(3) Respect the socio-cultural origins of host communities and protect the unique socio-cultural features of destinations. The UNWTO (ibid.) make a link between not only the conservation of cultural uniqueness but how these features are attractive to tourists and should be preserved for future generations to enjoy and benefit from. The long-term link to economic sustainability and visitor satisfaction based on a cultural resource base is explicit, i.e. the conservation of tangible cultural artifacts will ensure the continuation of a tourism market that will provide livelihood opportunities for local people;

(4) Ensure that all stakeholders have access to the socio-economic benefits of the tourism industry. The benefits from tourism, e.g. livelihood opportunities should thus be equally available to all inhabitants of a destination area, irrespective of culture, ethnicity, gender, social class or any other classification of minority status.

(5) Monitor the impacts of tourism. This aim is crucial not only for safeguarding the quality of the socio-natural environment but also offering an on-going monitoring system to evaluate the progress of sustainable tourism against agreed goals. This allows scope for the continuation of existing strategies if successful or the development of new ones if not.

(6) Ensure that all relevant stakeholders are informed about the process of sustainable tourism development and encouraged to participate in the process. This framework thus requires the consensus and support from all relevant stakeholders to be successful and may require investment in capacity building to ensure that certain groups, e.g. the poor, have the knowledge and skill to participate in the process

An evident focus within these six aims is upon consumer satisfaction as a means to sustaining tourism that emphasises a ‘tourism-first’ tradition of sustainability, i.e. a trade-off of the tourism economy’s growth set against environmentally and socially defined limits. The recognition of the environmental limits of tourism is also strongly advocated in aims 2 and 5, that refer to the protection and efficient use of resources and their on-going monitoring. The importance of stakeholder participation in the process of sustainable tourism is also emphasized in aim 6, which implicitly would involve the option of capacity building where those stakeholders did not have the relevant knowledge and skills base to permit participation in the process.

The application of a sustainable tourism at a regional level is demonstrated through the general framework for sustainable tourism in Europe is shown in Table 3.2 (Karas & Ferencova, 2012, cited in Janusz and Bajdor, 2013, pp.526-527). This general framework includes all three pillars of sustainable tourism emphasizing in the environmental sphere that biodiversity and the effective use of non-renewable resources are crucial to the sustainability of the tourism industry.

The need to minimize all types of pollution, environmental degradation and to reduce waste from tourism activities are also referred to. The framework covers most of the impacts that tourism can bring to the natural environment and which must be resolved as soon as possible. However, climate change is not mentioned which ignores a crucial aspect of claims of sustainable tourism. i.e. its spatial scale.

At a socio-cultural perspective, the satisfaction of tourists and local communities with the quality of services and employment opportunities are identified as being essential to the success of sustainable tourism. Social equity with a fair distribution of profits from tourism through employment and livelihood

Table 3.2: A general framework for sustainable tourism (Karas & Ferencova, 2012, cited in Janusz and Bajdor, 2013)

1. Economical capacity – the tourism and economic efficiency of enterprises in the region must be competitive enough to be able to continue their activities, further development, and the achievement of long-term benefits.
2. Local affluence which is the result of maximising the profits from tourism, in accordance with the number of tourists visiting a particular destination.
3. The level of quality of human resource to increase the number of jobs to support the tourism industry. This considers salary, quality of service and the ability to work without discrimination on the basis race, age, and physical condition.
4. Social equity to ensure fair distribution of profits from tourism, which can be used to increase job opportunities and better provision of services for poor citizens.
5. Satisfying tourists regardless of their age, race, or disability.

6. Local control, which is used to increase the involvement of local community in the planning and decision-making, management and development of the tourism industry.
7. Level of satisfaction of the local community – to improve the quality of life of local community, including social structure, access to resources and amenities, while avoiding all forms of degradation or exclusion.
8. Cultural wealth – considering the historical, traditional and distinctive local culture.
9. Physical integration to enhance the physical attractiveness of the region, both urban and rural, and avoidance of physical or visual degradation of the environment.
10. Biodiversity – to preserve natural resources and the landscape while minimising detrimental action.
11. Resource efficiency – optimising and minimising the use of non-renewable resources.
12. Clean environment – diminishing emissions of pollutants to nature: air, water, soil, and reduce the waste generated by tourists.

opportunities and better provision of services for poor citizens is stressed within this framework. The socio-cultural aspects are addressed thoroughly in this framework, which aims to protect the culture of communities from being adversely affected by that of tourists.

Whilst the framework is laudable and would undoubtedly create a sustainable tourism utopia at a local level it fails to provide the policies and strategies of how to achieve this. However, it clearly demonstrates that tourism development cannot be just left to market forces to determine its outcomes and that there is a need for an approach of integrated policy, planning and management to ensure that tourism is sustainable into the future. The question however of how to best environmentally manage tourism and induce strategies for sustainable

development in a variety of destination types, traversing a spectrum from mass tourism to protected areas, remains an on-going one.

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges is how to make mass tourism more sustainable, can a model of sustainable mass tourism (SMT) be developed? For Weaver (2012), SMT represents an evolutionary process of reform of the relationship between tourism and nature, although he recognises that the shade of environmental sustainability that manifests itself, i.e. weak or strong remains uncertain. A further consideration of a sustainable form of mass tourism is the spatial dimension of the tourism system. Whilst stakeholder partnerships and the employment of a range of environmental planning and management techniques that embrace carrying capacity analysis, limits of acceptable change, environmental zoning, environmental audits and certification, and indicators of sustainable tourism development may be utilised, their focus is predominantly at a destination level. However, the greatest challenge to truly legitimate claims of a sustainable tourism-environment and carbon-neutral relationship occurs at the global spatial level. Mass mobility that is inherent to mass tourism is reliant on a carbon intensive fuel based transport system that makes a significant contribution to global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and global warming. As Scott (2011) suggests how the tourism sector chooses to engage with climate change is crucial to its future sustainability.

3.4 The relationship between Political Economy, Neoliberalism and Sustainable Tourism

Given the inherent ambiguity of sustainability, in a political context the political values of those who are powerful decision-makers are likely to have a hegemonic influence on how it is interpreted. Subsequently, Mowforth and Munt (2003) claim that sustainability needs to be placed and understood within the context of power relations. They contend (p.122):

If it [sustainable tourism] remains a 'buzzword' which can be so widely interpreted that people of very different outlooks on a given issue can use it to support their cause, then it will suffer the same distortions to which older-established words such as 'freedom' and 'democracy' are subjected.

In reference to Mowforth and Munt's (ibid) quotation the term has been readily adopted by a range of tourism stakeholders including international agencies, national governments, non-governmental organisations and the tourism industry. That it can be so readily adopted by those that hold power suggests that either they perceive it as being of little threat to their interests or that they are acknowledging its potential threat through seeking to control it. Certainly issues of equitable distribution and participatory approaches present a threat to existing power interests and may challenge the practices of neo-liberalism.

The role of local of local government in the planning and development of tourism to ensure greater and more widely-spread benefits from tourism was advocated by Britton, 1982. However, this was encouraged four decades ago before neo-liberalism became entrenched as the global development policy favoured by

international agencies. Nevertheless, it is difficult to ignore the potential role of government in attempting to balance the interests of external and internal players and acting as a broker to seek co-operation between political, community and business interests (Pearce *et al.*, 1996, cited in Sofield, 2003, p.102). Yet the roles and responsibilities of local government in the early 21st century in addressing sustainable tourism development remains an under-researched area (Ruhanen, 2013). Nevertheless, there exists a generalized acceptance that the principles of sustainable development should define the framework of destination-level planning and management for tourism (*ibid.*).

Criticisms of the effects on neo-liberalism on tourism have also been made on the basis of the exploitation of nature and communities as resources for the industry:

Tourism perpetuates inequality, with the multinational companies of the advanced capitalist countries retaining the economic power and resources to invest in and ultimately control nations of the developing world. In many cases, a developing country's engagement with tourism serves simply to confirm its dependent, subordinate position in relation to the advanced capitalist societies—itsself a form of neo-colonialism.

The equating of the paradigms of neo-liberalism with growing inequality is a constant criticism of neo-liberal thinking that runs contrary to the goals of sustainable development. The influence of external control of a country's natural resources is particularly contentious, epitomized by the application of SAP's

through the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank to national economies. These global institutions play a crucial role in shaping the economic environment for tourism investment and development in most of nations (Brohman, 1996; Mowforth & Munt, 2009).

The IMF and World Bank have encouraged export driven economic growth in LDCs especially in economic sectors where they appear to have a comparative advantage as in the case of tourism in some countries. This emphasis and promotion of tourism by these international agencies has led to an increased interest in the industry by multinationals in attempt to establish new markets but also gain access and control of natural and human resources (Scheyvens, 2002). Some LDCs have also turned to tourism as an outcome of the fall in world commodity prices that occurred during the 1980s and 1990s combined with a simultaneous need to meet debt repayments on loans taken from the IMF and World Bank.

An example of the influence of neo-liberalism and the structural adjustment programs that accompany them can have on the tourism industry and natural resources of an LDC is illustrated in the case of Kenya. As part of Kenya's Structural Adjustment Programme tourism was identified by the World Bank as an industry that could maximise foreign exchange earnings (Hawkins and Mann, 2007). The development of wildlife tourism as a key market segment whilst achieving higher levels of foreign exchange earnings also led to natural resource degradation and threatening the sustainability of both the environment and

tourism as a consequence of an absence of weak environmental planning and management. The threat to the sustainability of tourism posed by the deteriorating environmental resource base ultimately led to the Kenyan government having to request World Bank support to mitigate the environmental problems.

Thus, the challenge of neo-liberalism to sustainable tourism development is that it is likely to mean that resources and decision-making are removed from local control. If power is handed to external operators they have little accountability to the local population over decisions that are made about how resources are utilised. Whilst development policy driven by local government may not assure community participation, in democratic systems at least the local populace has an opportunity to vote for an alternative at the next election. Neo-liberalism does not work in the same way there is no vote by the local populace. As a result, if tourism is not planned for and managed in a sustainable manner and the control of resources lies externally and they are used to benefit particular people or groups, the negative effects of tourism are more difficult to adapt to or mitigate. Host communities, their culture and environments may subsequently be negatively affected and social inequalities will remain or may be accentuated. As in Britton's (1982) and Wearing's (2002) analyses, LDCs with rich natural and cultural resources when placed into the international tourism market driven by neo-liberalism may become little more than neo-political economic colonies of the developed world.

Yet despite the importance of political economy to how sustainable tourism is interpreted more needs to be understood of the relationships that exist between stakeholder groups. Power relations in tourism tend to be dynamic through various phases of development as they work in many different directions and are interconnected (Cheong & Miller, 2000). For example, tourists can become locals if they establish permanent residency at destinations, or locals can become local stakeholders by engaging in the tourism business. Yet as Cole (2007, p.946) claims that ‘there has been little analysis to understand why, and in what circumstances, the power of tourism can be harnessed’.

Central to harnessing the power of tourism from participatory perspectives ensuring the community is empowered to participate in it. While in some circumstances, marginal cultures have managed to make tourism into a political tool in the creation of their uniqueness, in others dis-empowering experiences have been generated through the commodification of their culture (Bianchi, 2003). Scheyvens (2002) recognises four dimensions of their empowerment: economic; psychological that is derived from self-esteem and pride associated to cultural traditions; political; and social as a consequence of increased community cohesion. Similarly, Sofield (2003) recognizes empowerment as a multidimensional process that provides a shift in balance between the dominant and the dependent, between the powerful and the powerless.

3.5 Stakeholders in sustainable tourism

Richardson and Fluker (2004, p.383) define tourism stakeholders as ‘those who have an interest in, or who are affected by tourism’. Besides, Weaver and Lawton (2010, pp.2-3) define tourism stakeholders as, ‘members of an interconnected network in which possibilities exist for interaction among any two or more components within the system’. These characteristics will be used to choose the right local stakeholders for the research. The four major stakeholder groups in tourism are tourists, local citizens, tourism businesspeople, and government officials (Byrd *et al.*, 2009a; Conaghan & Hanrahan, 2009). Within this research, only the last three groups of stakeholders are examined. De Oliveira (2003) suggests that communities which use (or want to use) tourism to make their economy more diverse must initiate policies and plans for the sustainable development of the area. The support of stakeholders such as community leaders, entrepreneurs, and citizens is crucial to the successful implementation of such plans (Gunn, 1994).

3.5.1 The involvement of stakeholders in sustainable tourism

According to Byrd and Gustke (2007), differing perceptions of tourism’s impact require discussion, which must involve all relevant stakeholders. The positive and negative impacts that tourism has on the community and how to control or minimise negative effects need to be explained clearly. Thus, all stakeholders can have a clearer understanding of the role of tourism in the community and a more sustainable means of tourism development can be conducted.

The involvement and awareness of all stakeholders decide whether future progress towards sustainability can be achieved or not (Williams & Ponsford, 2009). Costa (2001, p.439) states:

Tourism planning ought to be viewed from a rational and technical point of view (professionalism), which has to be matched against the particularity of every place, the needs and wishes of the people that live in the area, market forces, the availability of manpower and funding, and the position of the place in the world market.

Strategic planning using in the tourism industry in modern times is very important, as it involves many different stakeholders, and remains adaptable to altering environmental, social and economic circumstances. To achieve sustainable tourism, the support of many and varied parties involved must be forthcoming (Long, 1997). Sharpley (2009) suggests that the needs of local communities and other stakeholders should be reflected as much as possible in the use and management of the destination environment, which should optimise the benefits that accrue to them through tourism and satisfy other needs as well. The inclusion of stakeholders in developing policies is the key to the sustainable development of tourism in a community (Byrd *et al.*, 2009a). Without the support of stakeholders in the community, it is not possible to develop tourism in a sustainable way. Within the definition introduced by the World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2004), informed participation of all relevant stakeholders

and strong political leadership are among the six main principles of sustainable tourism development.

Developing of tourism in any community cannot be just a matter of matching product supply to tourist demands: local opinions must also be considered (Menning, 1995). Local citizens will ultimately determine which tourism impacts can be accepted. Citizens' leisure needs and wants must be considered before any development for tourists (Richardson & Long, 1991). As a community is where tourists stay, considering the desires of the citizenry is essential to maintain citizen support for the development of tourism, (Andereck & Vogt, 2000).

Byrd *et al.* (2008) state that, to take stakeholders into account, researchers and planners must categorise and appreciate stakeholders' understandings of sustainable tourism development in their community. They identified five factors of stakeholder understanding of sustainable tourism development: (1) natural resources, (2) planning, (3) economic concerns, (4) educational needs, and (5) awareness. It is vital to note that not all these concerns can be addressed as stakeholders might wish (e.g. when there are two different stakeholder groups compete for the same interests) (Byrd *et al.*, 2008). The most important factor in how different environments are created or perceived in a destination is the various perceptions of and values attached to the environment, or differing attitudes regarding how and to what extent environmental resources should be used or protected, among different groups of stakeholders (Sharpley, 2009). Differences in understanding of tourism and tourism development may also give rise to

conflicts between different stakeholder groups, which is due to different individual perceptions and interests on the general costs and benefits of development (Reid *et al.*, 2004). Simpson (2008) argues that, in some circumstances, local participation may reduce or undermine the benefits tourism brings to a community. To reduce conflict, the attitudes of stakeholders must be thoroughly understood (Reid *et al.*, 2004). Vincent and Thompson (2002) recommend that before proceeding with development, all stakeholders should be considered. Yuksel *et al.* (1999) argue that this can lessen conflict in the long run, by ‘drawing on the knowledge and insights of stakeholders’ (p.359). Sautter and Leisen (1999) also note that when stakeholders’ interests coincide, collaboration and compromise are more likely.

Different stakeholder groups tend to have different goals and interests regarding sustainable tourism development. However, they share some goals of sustainability, as Figure 3.1 shows (Timur and Getz, 2009). The tourism industry and community have the common goal of economic and socio-cultural sustainability; tourism and environmental supporters share economic and resource sustainability goals, and local citizens, government organisations and environmental supporters share goals relating to sustainable resource use and protection (Moisey & McCool, 2001). Figure 3.1 shows that sustainability can only be achieved when diverse stakeholder groups share similar goals (Moisey & McCool, 2001). Besides, it also proposes that, to achieve sustainability, all relevant stakeholders from the three major groups have to be involved (Byrd *et*

al., 2009a). Without this, common meaning and goals among local stakeholders are unachievable (Timur & Getz, 2009).

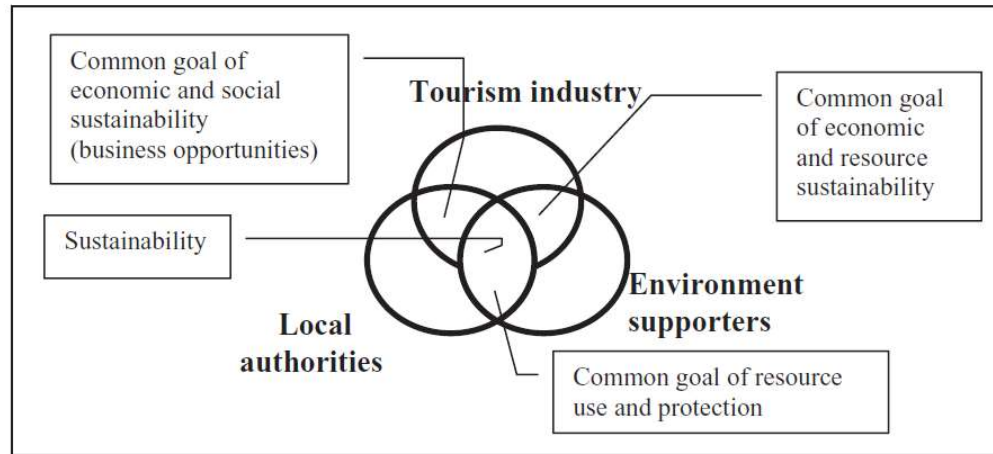


Figure 3.1: Sustainability goals of main stakeholder groups (Timur and Getz, 2009, p.222)

3.5.2 The participation of stakeholders in sustainable tourism

According to Farrell and Twining-Ward (2004), it is necessary for stakeholders to understand the concepts and what are being discussed in the community so that stakeholder participation at any level can be beneficial and successful in tourism planning and management. Once stakeholders have understood about tourism and sustainability, they can decide informedly and consciously about tourism development within their own area. Even if they are not allowed to directly affect tourism development, their knowledge of tourism and sustainability will support the social as well as cultural interactions among all stakeholders. This can be a consequence of a simple consciousness of the other interests within the area, which offer them a better knowledge of the reason behind tourism policies and

development (Byrd, 2007). This type of participation allows tourism development a better opportunity to be successful and sustainable.

Among the fundamental principles proposed by the WTO (2004) is informed participation of all related stakeholders. Tosun (2000) claims that this principle is a multi-dimensional educational empowerment procedure for any stakeholders, which means stakeholders must understand what sustainable tourism is (Byrd, 2007), as tourism is complex, with many different features and viewpoints, and is not easily accessed by everyone. Farrell and Twining-Ward (2004, p.276) suggest that stakeholders need to know not only basically about the issues but also how they connect to other features of the local community to make informed decisions:

Sustainability depends not just on those key elements often referred to as the 'tourism industry' but on the whole 'comprehensive tourism system'. This knowledge will require a substantial shift toward more adaptive, interdisciplinary and whole system management and research which, while not easy to accomplish, are likely to bring considerable and long-term rewards.

Wilson *et al.* (2001) also acknowledge that it is crucial to have having the support of stakeholders for tourism. Byrd and Gustke (2007) indicate that it is vital for stakeholders to understand the issues. As a consequence, before measuring levels of support for tourism among stakeholders, scholars should check whether the principles of sustainable tourism development are familiar to them or not. This

step can help planners and leaders know about the community and their understanding of sustainable tourism development, and then apprise the levels in the community's understanding. Solutions and policies can be built on this data to assist relevant stakeholders to understand importance of sustainable tourism development and the process better.

Byrd and Gustke (2007) advise that to increase support for sustainable tourism policies, it is necessary to inform the planners and educate the stakeholders about the development. Stakeholders will generally support plans for development if they find a tourism development plan sustainable. Nevertheless, stakeholders may misunderstand that tourism development is not sustainable if they are left to interpret a tourism plan unaided. As a result, they may undertake certain actions (maybe legal and/or illegal) to obstruct the policy, plan, or development implementation (Markwick, 2000). Dodds (2007a; 2007b; and 2010), Dodds & Butler (2010) and Marzuki *et al.* (2012), with their studies on the implementations of sustainable tourism policies at local level, identify responses of local stakeholders towards the policies and a number of barriers to this process. Within her study, Dodds (2007a, p.319) finds out that 'a lack of integration and cooperation with other government sectors, economic priority over social and environmental considerations and limited participation by the private sector and local community in implementing the plan' has hindered policy implementations for sustainable tourism at local level.

In another study, Dodds (2007b, p.63) also identified a number of issues that may lead to the failure of the application of sustainable tourism policies such as: ‘absence of political will, lack of awareness of sustainable tourism, lack of stakeholder participation, policy ambiguity, partisan tensions’, poor coordination and communication among stakeholders, and ‘short term economic prioritization’. These issues are also discovered in the study of Dodds (2010) when examining tourism development and sustainability in Koh Phi Phi. Besides, Dodds and Butler (2010), who also found the same issues with implementing policy for sustainable tourism, argue that to successfully implementing policy, political, cultural, economic, social and psychological change have to be made. It is not an easy task but it is a critical one to attain sustainable tourism goals (ibid.). Furthermore, Marzuki *et al.* (2012, p.599) confirm Tosun’s (2000) suggestion that ‘public participation processes in developing countries still face structural and operational problems, which result in limited opportunities for local residents to participate in tourism planning and development processes’. Obviously, without solving the above issues, sustainable tourism goals can hardly be achieved.

It has been acknowledged that, more generally in a tourism planning context, ‘consideration should be given to each stakeholder group, regardless of the relative power or interest held by each’ (Sautter & Leisen, 1999, p.314), not only to appreciate their differing roles and influence but as a basis for developing effective, democratic decision-making processes (Bramwell & Lane, 2000). Certainly, the influence of different stakeholder groups varies across destinations and broader political and economic policies (Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005). Byrd and

Gustke (2004) propose that one of the core forecasters for the support of stakeholders for sustainable tourism development in their area is perceived impact. Andereck and Nyaupane (2011, p.258) acknowledge that:

The amount of contact citizens has with tourists substantially influences the perception of tourism's role in the economy. This suggests that those who have contact with tourists on a frequent basis view tourism in a much more positive light than those who do not, as other studies have also found. However, this relationship is again mediated by personal benefit. It is becoming increasingly clear that logically, those who gain the most from tourism are the most supportive of existing and additional tourism development.

As a result, to plan and manage sustainable tourism well, it is necessary to understand the attitudes and interests of stakeholders deeply.

According to the WTO (2014), without using local initiatives which are consistent with local values and operating consistent to the local environment, area and cultures, tourism development cannot be sustained. As a result, all relevant stakeholders should take part in development and management process so that they can become permanent beneficiaries (Andereck *et al.* 2005). Musa *et al.* (2004) also state that, to be successful and sustainable, tourism development must rely on tourism-related programs, proposals, and local activities offered by local people. Moreover, it is vital for policy-makers to understand the antecedents of

such support to regulate what way of development is suitable for the area. The attitudes of the destination people toward tourism can be used as an indicator for tourism appropriateness (Lepp, 2007). Without taking into account the desires of both visitors and citizens, frustration is probable to increase, with catastrophic impacts. Gursoy and Rutherford (2004) warn that active opposition to tourism development may obstruct or even stop tourism development. Gursoy *et al.* (2010) advise that policy-makers and developers should offer opportunities for local people to take part in planning and management process. Local stakeholders know well about how their community adapts to alteration, and so can propose the most appropriate form of development for the community.

From the examination of numerous participatory tourism development practices in developing countries, Mowforth and Munt (2003, p.240) state that ‘the push for local participation comes from a position of power, the First World: It is easier to promote the principles of local participation on paper, from a distance, than to practice them’. Cases of participatory tourism development practices in developing countries are examples of, in their words, ‘manipulative participation or passive participation’ according to Pretty's typology (Mowforth & Munt, 2003, p.242).

Nevertheless, there are some barriers to community participation in the tourism development process in developing countries, namely operational, structural and cultural barriers (Tosun, 2000). Regarding operational barriers, Tosun (2000) introduces three main obstacles that planners usually encounter when they

implement a participatory development method. These obstacles comprise the centralisation of the public administration of tourism development, lack of coordination between involved parties, and a lack of available information for local people living in the tourist destination, and low public involvement in the tourism development process is the result. Structural barriers are frequently related to institutional power structures, and legislative and economic systems. Tosun (2000) proposes some relevant barriers, such as attitudes of professionals, lack of trained human resources, lack of expertise, elite domination, lack of an appropriate legal system, the relatively high cost of community participation and a lack of financial resources. Finally, with cultural barriers, factors comprise the limited capacity of poor people to handle development efficiently, apathy and low levels of awareness in the local community, which all function as obstacles to participatory tourism development. These barriers, which have barred developing countries from attaining a higher level of development, may be a postponement of the prevailing social, political and economic structures in developing countries (*ibid.*).

Kim *et al.* (2014, p.1) confirm the above barriers in their research by identifying them as: 'low education levels and lack of knowledge about tourism'; 'poor living conditions and lack of financial support'; 'busy daily routine and lack of time for tourism participation'; 'local community's perception of tourism as a seasonal business with low income'; and 'power disparities, institutional disincentives and local's distrust in authorities'. In addition, Tosun (2000) states that community participation as an expression of citizens' power in developing countries is a

complicated matter, as it involves diverse ideological beliefs, administrative arrangements, political forces, and redistribution of wealth and power. To approach sustainable tourism, Mustapha *et al.* (2013) and Velnisa Paimin *et al.* (2014), who also confirm the barriers identified by Tosun (2000), affirm that all relevant stakeholders need to work together to encourage local participation. On the other hand, Saufi *et al.* (2014), who claim that ‘the underperformance of state tourism agencies and private sector providers resulted in ... limitations on host community opportunities to participate in tourism development’ (p.801), focus on educating ‘host communities about tourism in order to increase participation levels’ (p.817).

3.6 Criticisms of sustainable tourism

Whilst the concept of sustainable development and its application to tourism has received extensive consideration its implementation has not readily transferred to destinations at an operational level with a lack of evidence of critical change in the practice of tourism industry in many places (Moscardo & Murphy, 2014). In a review of government documentation and tourism policy Moscardo (2011) found little change in comprehensions of how tourism is conceptualized and planning processes it requires to be sustainable. Whilst it is true that most initiatives consider the three pillars of sustainability they stress the requirement for economic development which supports environmental protection and improves the quality of life of the local population. Subsequently, the three dimensions rarely receive equal consideration when proposing strategic orientations or specific tools for application (Torres-Delgado & Palomeque, 2012, p.8).

Similarly, Butler (1997, p.119) criticises that governments have adopted sustainable tourism development ideologies with ‘so much enthusiasm but so little real action’. Bramwell (2004, p.32) maintains also that “governments frequently talk ‘green’ but in practice, usually give priority to economic growth over environmental protection”. As a result, in reality, sustainable tourism policies still reflect traditional concerns of prioritising economic returns even when presented as a model of alternative development.

Many of the challenges mentioned above are illustrated in some studies such as the ones of Miller *et al.* (2010) and Canavan (2014). In their research on the impacts and opportunities of sustainable development of tourism in Queensland, Australia, Miller *et al.* (2010) find not only positive impacts but also negative ones on the economy, environment and society of the region. Whilst there was inward investment in tourism and new job creation, there was also competition between tourism and agriculture. Effective land-use management was mentioned to protect the traditional agriculture, which could also be used to serve tourists, in the region. This conflict showed that there was a lack of balance between tourism and other economy sectors in the region. Although natural resources were better appreciated, water became scarcer as it was not well managed. The coming of new people to the region could negatively affect the lifestyle of the region. The socio-cultural features of a local area need to be protected as they are important factors that attract tourists to the sites. If they are negatively affected, tourism in the region may experience a decline.

Four key issues were identified to solve the current issues that tourism caused to the region: ‘appropriate land use management’, ‘aging or insufficient infrastructure and a lack of resources’, ‘preservation of community heritage and lifestyle’ and ‘regional conflict’ (Miller *et al.*, 2010, p.18). ‘Appropriate land use management’ can be used to solve negative effects on the economy. While developing tourism in an area, the use of land for tourism infrastructure has to be well managed. These constructions may need a huge area for resorts, theme parks or hotels. As a result, less land is available for agriculture. With suitable land use management, this issue may be minimised and the negative effects of tourism on other sectors can be reduced. Next, ‘aging or insufficient infrastructure and a lack of resources’ should be considered. As infrastructure and natural resources serve both groups, both tourists and local people may experience shortage of these resources if these resources are not suitable managed. This shortage may lead to the opposition of local stakeholders to tourism industry in the area. Consequently, addressing these issues can not only help to make local people more supportive for the industry but also be able to serve and satisfy the upcoming tourists. Finally, ‘preservation of community heritage and lifestyle’ and ‘regional conflict’ are obviously socio-cultural issues. These issues tend to be ignored in many areas while planning and implementing sustainable tourism. By solving these issues, hosts may become friendlier to tourists while the unique features of the destinations are preserved.

In his research on sustainable tourism on the Isle of Man, Canavan (2014) also identifies both positive and negative of sustainable tourism on this region. While

economic benefits include job creation, more facilities and increased government revenue, disadvantages may include the danger of becoming too reliant on tourism industry. This issue can make the economy of the region become vulnerable if the number of tourists declines although ‘long-term sustainability initiatives that will maintain the industry’ (*ibid.*, p.143) are invested. In terms of natural environment, while awareness about the importance of natural environment were raised, leading to the better protection and conservation of environmental resources, the rapid increase in the number of tourists visiting scenic areas was harmful to the natural environments. Tourism expansion was not expected as it may cause more landscape damage. Besides, inappropriate construction also led to scenic damage. As a result, ‘more collective and vision-oriented approaches to tourism industry planning are needed to address broader and more pervasive environmental and sustainability challenges’ (Williams & Ponsford, 2009, p.396). In terms of social effects of tourism in the Isle of Man, the region got many benefits such as: tourist facilities, positive image, popularity and enjoyment of tourist atmosphere. On the other hand, disturbance, loss of identity and loss of entertainment options were negative effects. The above negative effects can be seen as environmental and social costs that should be included in planning for sustainable tourism development. This research implies that sustainable tourism needs to be better planned and implemented. While it can bring many benefits in terms of economy, natural environment and socio-culture, there are also negative effects that should be minimised or eliminated.

Subsequently, the traditional economic focus of policy even under the aegis of sustainable tourism means that a policy may fail to deliver sustainable goals across the three pillars of sustainability, including the mitigation of environmental problems. Also, when addressing sustainable tourism consideration needs to be lent to its spatial dimension as a system whose geographical range and impacts extend beyond the physical boundaries of the destination. Moscardo and Murphy (2014) provide an example of this problem through a critical examination of the use of sustainable tourism to the Great Barrier Reef. The distinctive characteristics of many tourists to this area are that they are traveling a long way to reach the having to drive or fly long distances. As a result, they are actively contributing to climate change, which directly threatens the economic activity of the tourism sector in the long-term through environmental change. The types of changes that threatened the longevity of the tourism industry includes rising sea levels leading to higher rates of inundation, coastal and beach erosion; the flooding and possible disappearance through submergence of low-lying small islands including the Maldives and the Pacific Isles; changes to precipitation patterns with increased water supply problems such as those being increasingly experienced in the Mediterranean Basin; a reduction in bio-diversity and wildlife; a loss of coral reefs caused by increases in ocean temperatures and acidification; and an increase in the frequency and magnitude of extreme climatic events (World Tourism Organisation, 2003). The neglect of the inclusion and focus on carbon emissions generated by travel to the destination is an area that has been neglected to relatively recently in the sustainable tourism debate (Moscardo, 2009; Scott, 2011). This spatial dimension to the tourism system, the inter-connectivity

between home and the destination environment and the requirement for a carbon-centric mobility between the two raises questions whether a truly environmentally sustainable tourism is achievable in the short to mid-term.

3.7 Conclusion

Sustainable development has been popularised in the last three decades and become integral to the concept of sustainable tourism that can be understood as being a reaction to the negatives environmental impacts of tourism. However, whilst the conservation of nature is a central tenet of the environmental pillar of sustainability, it juxtaposes and interlinks with economic and social dimensions of sustainability. Thus, the conservation of nature is critical as the environment provides the resources for the long-term future of the tourism economy and the livelihood opportunities and social enhancement that should accompany economic growth. Following its parent concept of sustainable development, this economic and social enhancement should include policy to tackle intra-generational inequalities beside the concerns of inter-generational equity. It should also embrace the empowerment of local communities and raise their capacity where necessary to become participants in the development process. Thus, tourism can be used as a method to support economic development and improving the quality of life of tourists as well as host communities. As a result, the development of a balanced model of sustainable tourism will bring significant contribution to the sustainability of the society generally.

Many initiatives and guidelines for sustainable tourism have been developed that have generated a framework for the concept at both theoretical and practical levels. Nevertheless, the ambiguities of sustainable development that open it to wide political interpretations have similarly manifested themselves in tourism, leaving open it to influences of political interpretation and hegemony. The paradigm of neo-liberalism also dictates against a continued local control of natural resources where they are held as being economically attractive to external parties. This makes the achievement of a balanced model of sustainable tourism that balances the three core pillars of economy, environment and society harder to achieve as externalized control is likely to diminish the voices of local participation.

Whilst there exist numerous interpretations of sustainable tourism it is also important to recognize that there is not one transferable blueprint that can be moved between destinations. This is because destinations are dynamic entities defined by their unique environment, economic, social and cultural characteristics. This emphasizes the case for participatory approaches to the strategic planning of sustainable tourism that emphasizes locally defined goals as advocated in Agenda 21. It also important to recognize that any claims to a truly environmentally sustainable tourism beyond the geographical boundaries of a destination is unrealistic in the short to mid-term as a consequence of the reliance on a carbon-centric mobility system within tourism to move tourists between their home and destination environments.

Stakeholder participation can be classified into two categories. It can be considered as all methods or practices that stakeholders are involved in decision-making processes. As a result, forms of stakeholder participation might include attending meetings, participation in a partnership or in a consultation exercise. However, stakeholder participation can also include deeper and more principled involvement. Actively consulting with an exchange of opinions and views can empower local stakeholders. Stakeholder participation entails an important degree of involvement to achieve such meaningful contribution. Some barriers to local stakeholder participation in the tourism development process in developing countries (operational, structural and cultural) were also discussed.

Chapter Four:

Tourism Planning and Policy in Vietnam

4.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the relationship and structures between VNAT and the Provincial People's Committee with regard to sustainable development policy and tourism development policy and practice. Besides, this chapter digitally reviews tourism planning from several provinces that emphasise sustainable tourism development. In Vietnam, there have not been many certain policies for sustainable tourism development established. Nevertheless, sustainable tourism development is stated clearly in the new law of tourism of Vietnam.

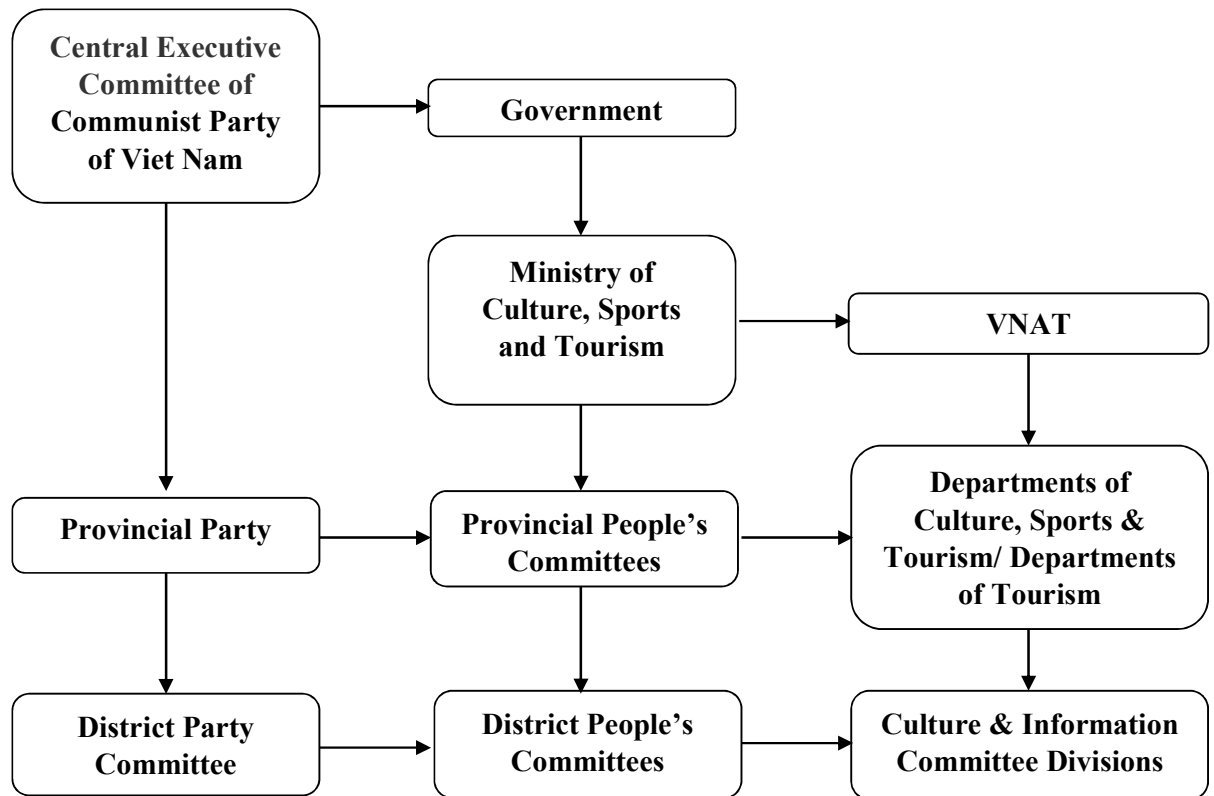
4.1 Structure of tourism sector in Vietnam

Tourism in Vietnam has undergone some different phases of development and was administered by two different Ministries. Before 1990, tourism sector in Vietnam was administered by the Ministry of Foreign Trade. In 1992, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism was established and tourism sector was one of the sectors administered by this Ministry on the legal level for activities including decrees, legal documents, approval of plans, ... Within Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT) is a specialised agency which is responsible for the performance of all tourism-related activities of Vietnam.

In centrally controlled cities and provinces, tourism is administered by the respective Departments of Culture, Sports and Tourism or, in some provinces, Departments of Tourism, such as the case of Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, the research site of this thesis. These Departments are part of the Provincial People's Committees, the provincial administration, which are responsible for tourism decisions at both the macro and micro level. At lower level, district level, Culture

and Information Committee Divisions are responsible for tourism administration. These Divisions are part of the District People's Committees, the district administration, which are responsible for tourism decisions at the micro level. Nevertheless, Vietnam is governed by the Communist Party of Vietnam. Thus all the activities of tourism are also under the administered of different levels of the Party. These authorities also have certain commands for the Government based on the reports submitted to them. The figure of structure of tourism of Vietnam can be found in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: The structure of tourism of Vietnam



4.1.1 Vietnam National Administration of Tourism and its function:

The Vietnam National Administration of Tourism is a government agency attached to the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism and has the function of

assisting the Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism in administering tourist operations and activities throughout the country (Vietnam National Assembly, 2017). There are seven Chairman assisting units: Travel Department, Hotel Department, Planning-Finance Department, International Cooperation Department, Personnel Organisation Department, Tourism Marketing Department, and Office. Besides, there are four Subordinate Units: Tourism Information Technology Centre, Institute for Tourism Development Research, Vietnam Tourism Review Magazine and Tourism Newspaper. With those units, VNAT's internal duties includes licensing for tour operators, travel agencies and domestic tour guides as well as the classification of three up to five-star hotels. The Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism at provincial level is in charge of the lower classes of accommodation. Moreover, VNAT also covers all issues of training, quality control, and infrastructure. For the external duties, VNAT is responsible for promotion activities as well as the domestic and international marketing.

One of the major responsibilities of VNAT is to develop the tourism master plan which defines the goals for national tourism and the role of state management on tourism. They are currently working on the Vietnam National Tourism Master Plan until 2020, Vision to 2030. It is a top-down guideline throughout the country so that all the provinces can follow to achieve what is expected by the Government (VNAT, 1995). For achieving the goals of the Master Plan, VNAT established the Strategy on Vietnam's Tourism Development until 2020, Vision to 2030 (The Government Web Portal, 2013). The strategy

states the general and specific objective, then introduces solutions for Development of tourism products, Development of infrastructure and technical facilities for tourism, Training and nurturing human resource for tourism, Market development, tourism promotion and brands, Investment and policies for tourism development, International cooperation in tourism, State management in tourism, and also a specific Action plan.

4.1.2 The relationship and structures between VNAT and the Provincial People's Committee

As being discussed above, VNAT is the specialised agency of Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism to deal with the performance of all tourism-related activities of Vietnam. Thus, this organisation controls all the activities of tourism in Vietnam and reports to the Government through Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. VNAT prepares all the tourism policies, including sustainable tourism policies, and action programs for the whole country to follow at macro level and controlled strictly by the Government and report to the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. At local level, Departments of Culture, Sports and Tourism or, in ten centrally controlled cities or provinces such as Hà Nội, TP HCM, Đà Nẵng, Quảng Ninh, Hải Phòng, Quảng Bình, Thừa Thiên Huế, Khánh Hòa, Bà Rịa - Vũng Tàu, Kiên Giang, Departments of Tourism are responsible for tourism of their own areas. These Departments are specialised agency of Provincial People's Committees. They prepare specific policies and action programs for tourism within their area to ensure that all the requirements by the Government, prepared by VNAT, as well as the requirements of the local Government are achieved. For

instance, below are the triple bottom line objectives of the Government’s national strategy (VNAT, 2014a) (Table 4.1):

<p>Table 4.1: The triple bottom line objectives of the Government’s national strategy (VNAT, 2014a)</p> <p>Economic objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To attract 10 to 10.5 million international visitors by 2020 (7.6 percent annual increase) and serve 48 million domestic tourism (5.3 percent annual increase). • To increase tourism revenues to US\$ 18-19 billion by 2020 (13.8 percent increase to 2015, 12 annual percent increase thereafter). • To contribute 6.5 to 7 percent of gross domestic production (GDP) by 2020. • To attract \$42.5 billion in investment increasing room supply (580,000 rooms by 2020). <p>Social objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase numbers employed in the tourism industry to over 3 million, of whom 870,000 are direct jobs. • To ensure that tourism development contributes to the preservation and promotion of Vietnam’s cultural values, improving the lives of its people. <p>Environmental objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop green tourism activities associated with preserving and promoting the value of natural resources and environmental protection, ensuring that tourism development complies with environmental law.

For the Economic objective: “To contribute 6.5 to 7 percent of gross domestic production (GDP) by 2020”, it depends on how other sectors of the economy perform. If, within this specific time frame, other sectors of the economy flourish significantly while tourism sector cannot be developed as well as them, this

objective can hardly be achieved. For the Economic objective: “To attract \$42.5 billion in investment increasing room supply (580,000 rooms by 2020)”, the responsibility lies at Provincial level. Each municipalities or provinces will assign a specific objective for economy annually for tourism sector. Besides, the social and environmental objectives are specified for each area based on the objectives of the Government’s national strategy. For instance, for the provinces with many areas that can be used to develop ecotourism, they will focus on this strength to achieve the objective. On the other hands, the ones without much natural environment to develop ecotourism such as Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, they focus on historical relics and cultural characteristics to develop tourism.

In brief, through Departments of Culture, Sports and Tourism or Departments of Tourism, Provincial People’s Committees administered tourism sector at provincial level by following policies and action programs established by VNAT but report directly to Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism and sometime VNAT. Nonetheless, the policies at local level are more specific, especially for sustainable tourism development, to fit the special features of the areas. They have certain policies to develop tourism in the region in the way it should be.

4.2 Tourism planning emphasising sustainable tourism development:

4.2.1 A case study of Danang, Thua Thien Hue and Quang Nam.

This case study reviews the tourism planning of the three central provinces of Vietnam, Danang, Thua Thien Hue and Quang Nam which are trying to cooperate to deliver superb experiences and excellent value to visitors (VNAT, 2014a) and

emphasising sustainable tourism development as of the key strategy for their destination management. These three provinces are located next to each other and recognise that there is a need to work together to provide a range of services including both public and private ones at with excellent value. They also recognise that there is a lack of communication and cooperation between the public and private sectors as well as between competing private companies. As communication and cooperation are key factors of successful sustainable tourism development (Yu *et al.*, 2009), the lack of this may lead to the hinderance of sustainable tourism development at local level (Dodds, 2007a).

To deal with this issue, a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation for combined tourism development was signed on 27 February 2014 by the provincial People's Committees of the three provinces Danang, Thua Thien Hue and Quang Nam and the VNAT. With this memorandum, the cooperation could be processed and become more sustainable.

Within the area of these three provinces, there are three World Heritage Sites which offer unforgettable Vietnamese urban as well as rural experiences, probably with more authenticity and hospitality than in the country's two biggest cities (Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh). Moreover, with speedily developing accommodation system with leading resort developments, the area can offer high-end demands for any tourism markets. Nonetheless, they faced sharp decline in occupancy when accommodation supply increased, especially during the collapse of the Chinese market in 2014. There was, thus, a need for more a strategic broadly-based

marketing approach. Besides, while there was a significant supply of training facilities and of students in the region, there was a huge gap in providing human resources with actual industry needs. To solve those problems, the three provinces set three visions to make the region become (VNAT, 2014a, p.2):

- *An internationally recognised holiday destination which can hold more visitors for at least five nights.*
- *The destination offering best value in Vietnam, building on the existing product strengths of Đà Nẵng, Thừa Thiên-Huế and Quảng Nam, improving them and adding new product.*
- *The region with a strong green tourism agenda, building on eco-city and responsible tourism initiatives.*

With the third vision, the region wants to address sustainable tourism through green tourism and responsible tourism. In their action plan, they clearly stated “adopting green and responsible tourism agendas and implementing them” and “Improving the product, province by province, to meet (future) market needs” by “addressing product weaknesses and introducing green technology innovations” (VNAT, 2014a, p.3).

In the tourism objectives to the year 2020, Quang Nam Province aims to the development of rapid and sustainable tourism as a key economic sector of the province to lead to the increase of income and the improvement of living standards. They focus on future development with cultural heritage (Hoi An, My Son), cultural tourism combined with eco-tourism, based on an intensive tourism development area along the coast from Quang Nam to Da Nang and river tourism.

They also noted that some tourism sites were overloaded and proposed the development of traditional village festivals and cultural events to solve the problem of overloading. Besides, a wide range of solutions to address negative impacts of tourism on natural environment was also recommended (VNAT, 2014a, p.8):

The polluter must pay to restore, reconstruct the environment. Strengthen management measures, strict reward and punishment in construction, business development and tourism; focus on waste water treatment, waste in hotels, tourist attractions, and tourist resorts. There are mechanisms to encourage tourism businesses to apply technology-friendly environment; apply sanctions regime clearly for units and individuals causing environmental pollution. Strengthen coordination with the industry, and raise the level of participation and contribution of the community in a common effort to ensure the natural environment as well as the development of social tourism. Develop educational programs for tourists, local people and students in the schools about the importance of environmental protection for sustainable development.

Provincial tourism master plans to 2020 are being implemented. “They are approved by People’s Committees and represent government policy. They focus on attracting investment, spreading tourism, creating jobs and increasing accommodation supply.” by delivering the pillars of responsible tourism for Vietnam (VNAT, 2014a, p.38).

Table 4.2: The pillars of responsible tourism for Vietnam
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Pillar 1. Apply good governance in tourism

Create a dynamic and efficient tourism sector in Vietnam by developing and implementing clear, comprehensive policies that give direction, feature strong stakeholder coordination and aim to achieve enhanced competitiveness, sustainability and overall sector health.

Pillar 2. Foster competitive tourism businesses and sustainable markets

Improve the competitiveness of Vietnam's tourism investment, business operations and products/services, and ensure sustainable and inclusive growth and attractiveness for investors, operators and visitors.

Pillar 3. Use tourism for socio-economic development

Maximise the contribution of Vietnam's tourism sector to broad-based social development and poverty reduction through inclusive planning, development and operations.

Pillar 4. Build awareness and understanding of sustainable tourism

Raise awareness throughout Vietnamese society of tourism's potential for contributing to sustainable socio-economic development that can result in a positive experience for both visitors and hosts.

Pillar 5. Develop a skilled tourism workforce with decent working conditions

Create a well-trained and well-treated workforce, capable in governance, knowledge and business skills, and an engaged society that contributes to both the satisfaction of tourists and benefits for local people.

Pillar 6. Protect and sensitively promote natural and cultural heritage

Ensure that tourism, and all its stakeholders, play a positive role in the sustainable management of Vietnam's natural and cultural resources including their sustainable use by other sectors.

In Pillar 3, tourism is mentioned to be used for socio-economic development. This pillar focuses on social development through the development of tourism as well as poverty reduction which are crucial in sustainable tourism development. Furthermore, Pillar 4 focuses on building the awareness and understanding of sustainable tourism throughout Vietnamese society of tourism's potential for contributing to sustainable socio-economic development to create a positive

experience not only for visitors but also for hosts. This can help “reduce tensions and friction created by the complex interactions between the tourism industry, visitors, the environment and the communities which are host to holiday makers” (Bramwell & Lane 1993, p.2). Besides, it can help solve the conflicts “between those who benefit from tourism and those who do not: An example is rural tourism where some farmers benefit from tourism whereas others do not” (VNAT, 2014a, p.45). In Pillar 6, natural environment and social aspect are approached by focusing on protecting and delicately promoting natural and cultural heritage. This tries to follow that ‘Tourism and associated infrastructures that, both now and in the future: operate within natural capacities for the regeneration and future productivity of natural resources.’ (Tourism Concern, 1992, p.3)

In brief, tourism planning of these three provinces focuses much on sustainable tourism development and have some policies to approach this as discussed above. Although there are some difficulties such as lack of human resources, lack of basic facilities, ... they have planned out in detail the strategy to develop tourism, representing government policy but specified with the characteristics of the region.

4.2.1 A case study of Halong Bay:

Ha Long Bay is the Vietnam’s first World Heritage Site (recognised in 1994). It is located in Quang Ninh Province in the North of Vietnam. According to Quang Ninh Tourism Department 3.769 million tourist arrivals visited Quang Ninh in the first quarter of 2017, up 12% against the same period of 2016, with total revenue of USD 187,000. With the raise of tourists annually to the site, Halong Bay has been planned to be developed sustainably. Some foreign organisations have supported the site to protect the environment and planning for a more sustainable development. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) got together with Quang Ninh Province People’s Committee in 2012 to organize the 5th project steering committee meeting of “Protecting the environment in Ha Long Bay” project (VNAT, 2012). The project aims to improve the capacity for environmental management of the Ha Long City for local state organisations in

environmental monitoring and inspection, land use management, sustainable tourism planning and environment education. The project brought about good results which had a positive impact on the Bay environment as well as people's knowledge and behavior.

Besides, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) also cooperate with Vietnamese government officials to ensure the sustainability of the Halong Bay by raising the awareness and capacity of local nongovernmental as well as governmental organisations to efficiently manage natural resources (VNAT, 2014b). USAID and local government recognised that the development of aquaculture, fisheries, harbor, mining and transportation have increasingly placed pressure on the bay by degrading the environment and making the living environment of communities around the bay more vulnerable. As a result, they have certain policies to protect the natural resources and the local communities while the other economic sectors can still be developed.

In conclusion, tourism planning of Quang Ninh Province for Halong Bay receives the interests of some foreign organisations. They focus mostly on sustainable tourism development to solve the problem of overcrowded and overdevelopment of other economic sectors in the site and to contribute to the continuous development of tourism of Halong Bay.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter addresses the relationship and structures between VNAT and the Provincial People's Committee with regard to sustainable development policy and tourism development policy and practice. While the Provincial People's Committee is responsible for macro and micro level of tourism through Departments of Culture, Sports and Tourism or Department of Tourism in ten municipalities and provinces, VNAT just administers at macro level. A figure of the structure of tourism of Vietnam is also introduced. Provincial People's

Committee has to report directly to Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism most of the cases and to VNAT in some cases.

Besides, this chapter also reviews tourism planning from some provinces that emphasise sustainable tourism development. Da Nang, Thua Thien Hue, Quang Nam and Quang Ninh are chosen to be the case studies. They are all represent government policy on sustainable tourism while having certain policies to address specific issues of their own area. By doing do, they can develop sustainable tourism at their best.

Chapter Five:

Research Methodology

5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology used to collect data. It subsequently explains the use of an interpretive approach and the adoption of the

qualitative case study research that informs this study. The researcher's ontological assumption is that social worlds are socially constructed and different from the natural world. Consequently, research design and strategies must be constructed in how they reflect this paradigm. The epistemological framework and methodological assumptions are presented, as are the practicalities of conducting the research, including the data collection and analysis methods.

5.1 Rationale for Using an Interpretive Paradigm

A central premise of this research is to gain rich and in-depth understandings of interpretations held by local stakeholders of sustainable tourism. Interpretation of one's environment is not a fixed entity, but socially constructed. An interpretive approach was selected because interpretive research focuses on 'those life experiences that radically alter and shape the meanings persons give to themselves and their experiences' (Denzin, 2001, p.1). This study utilises the interpretive approach or *Verstehen*, rather than focusing on method and simple explanation drawing from 'brute' data (Schwandt, 1998).

The interpretive approach to investigating and understanding the social world is grounded on a philosophy that human beings habitually interpret and make sense of their world (Denzin, 1989). This research is mainly based on the researcher's understanding of local stakeholders' interpretations of sustainable development, and the interrelationship between their interpretations and sustainable tourism. Furthermore, it relies on the researcher's encounters with three groups of local stakeholders: citizens, tourism businesspeople and the local authority. Within this

research, the interpretive approach is more appropriate than a positivist approach, as it is more flexible and subjective in nature (Corbetta, 2003). The use of interviews as an interpretive method ‘can provide detailed information on the attitudes of stakeholders to tourism issues’ (Yuskel *et al.*, 1999, p.358). The richness of data from the interpretive approach is important for teasing out the nuances of stakeholders’ views of sustainable development and sustainable tourism.

In the history of social science research, positivism, which embraces a view of the world as constructed by scientific rules that explain phenomena through causal relationships (Jennings, 2010), was the major paradigm until recent decades. There was an assumption that the social world could be isolated and procedures could be repeated to generate the same results. Tourism research studies, such as classifying tourist behaviour into categories for typologies to predict future trends, also employed positivist approaches. However, this type of research serves to support the stereotyping of tourists and fails to engage with the complicated nature of an unpredictable social world, or that the casual relationships between people and their surrounding environment are not necessarily determinable (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004).

A paradigm is defined as ‘the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways’ (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.105). Within a paradigm, there are three major interrelated elements: ontology, epistemology,

and methodology (Grix, 2010; Jennings, 2010). The ontological assumption of this research leads to the epistemological assumption, which in turn helps decide the methodological approach for the particular data collection techniques (Cohen & Manion, 2000; Grix, 2010). The following sections will justify how the interpretivist paradigm is deemed appropriate for this study.

5.1.1 Ontological assumption

Ontology is concerned with ways of constructing reality, ‘how things really are’, ‘how things really work’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p.201) and basic beliefs about the nature of reality (Jennings, 2010). A social world does not exist as an objective reality in the ontological view of an interpretive paradigm but is created through the routine interaction of individuals that live within it (Holden, 2006). In the interpretivist paradigm, the ontological view recognises multiple perspectives within the research focus and ‘the manner in which these realities are constructed’ (Jennings, 2012, p.313). The social world here is considered to be made up of complicated and multiple realities, which can be only comprehended and interpreted from the emic point of view, i.e., those individuals who live within it (Goodson & Phillimore, 2004).

In contrast to interpretivists, positivists posit that the existence and reality of the social world is objective (Gephart, 1999). The reality of the world is considered to be regulated by universal laws and truths (Jennings, 2010), and thus is knowable and predictable (O’Leary, 2004). Guba and Lincoln (1998, p.204) also noted that:

An apprehendable reality is assumed to exist, driven by immutable natural laws and mechanisms. Knowledge of the 'way things are' is conventionally summarised in the form of time - and context - free generalisations, some of which take the form of cause and effect laws. Research can, in principle, converge on the 'true' state of affairs.

Positivists assume that general patterns of cause and effect, which can be discovered by scientific methods (Denscombe, 2010), can be used as a basis to predict and control social phenomena (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Furthermore, within positivist approach, only one single and absolute truth and reality of the world can be constructed and applicable to every similar phenomena (O'Leary, 2004).

This research posits that interpretations of sustainable tourism development are typically social constructs that reflect the interactions between people and their environment. Such constructs are subject to longitudinal change across time and between places and cultures (Jennings, 2010). An interpretivist approach is also justified by the research population that is based upon the inclusion of three groups of stakeholders: the local citizens, the private sector and local government, all of which are not homogenous groups of people and likely to have differing perspectives. Subsequently, in order to gain multiple realities through many different interpretations of local stakeholders towards sustainable tourism, this research considers different constructs of interpretations of individuals within

Baria-Vungtau Province. The realities will be drawn from the perception of each person and the context of the study.

5.1.2 Epistemological assumptions

Epistemology, originally from the Greek word *epistēmē* means ‘knowledge’, concerns the nature of the relationship between the researcher and the reality (Carson *et al.*, 2001; Jennings, 2010) or the way the reality can be known. Within an interpretive paradigm, a close relationship, social interaction, and working partnership between researcher and reality are deemed to be elemental for meaning and knowledge generation (Goodson & Phillimore, 2004; Jennings, 2010). Thus, the relationship between researcher and reality is interactive, co-operative and subjective (Decrop, 2004). Burrell and Morgan (1979, p.28) state that:

The interpretive paradigm is informed by a concern to understand the world as it is, to understand the fundamental nature of the social world at the level of subjective experience. It seeks explanation within the realm of individual consciousness and subjectivity, within the frame of reference of the participant as opposed to the observer of action.

In addition, within the epistemological assumption of interpretivism, it is argued that the best way to grasp the multiple realities of a social world is to become an actor in that social setting i.e. to become an insider (Blumer, 1962, cited in Jennings, 2010). In order to do so, *verstehen* (Weber, 1978, cited in Jennings,

2010) or the 'emic' perspective, which generally equips researchers to enter and immerse themselves in the dynamic social setting being studied (Hollinshead, 2004) should be obtained. When a researcher becomes a social actor in a setting, he or she is 'in the position of other people to see what meanings they give to their actions' (Abercrombie *et al.*, 1994, p.447) and is able to see things from the viewpoint of the informants (Jennings, 2010). Decrop (2004) claims that the relationship between researcher and researched is not objective but subjective, interactive and co-operative. Conversely positivist epistemology assumes that objective knowledge of the world can be achieved by taking the observer away from what is observed (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) and that the relationship between researcher and researched is value-free and objective (Jennings, 2010). By separating the researchers and the objects being studied, knowledge of the world can be achieved and verified through direct observations (Wearing & Wearing, 2001) and the subjective biases of the researcher can be avoided (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

This research posits that local stakeholders' interpretations and their relationship with sustainable tourism are generated through routine interrelations and interactions between the three groups of local stakeholders and the environments occurring in a study context. To gain *verstehen*, the researcher employed interpretive ethnography to enter and immerse himself in the social setting for an extended period of time. By doing so, 'thick description', which is enriched by personal experience, could be collected (Denscombe, 2002). As the researcher is part of the social world that he or she is studying, the researcher's own

experiences in the field should also be considered (Cohen & Manion, 2000). Thus, the researcher's reflexive and field notes were included as part of the underlying assumption of this paradigm. This approach supported the researcher to work with the respondents in the generation of knowledge of interest to this research.

5.1.3 Methodological assumptions

The aim of this research is to evaluate the interpretations of local stakeholders of sustainable tourism and it has been argued that an interpretive approach using qualitative methodology is deemed the best approach to attain the rich and nuanced data necessary. According to Sarantakos (2013), research methods are the instruments used by researchers to collect empirical evidence or to analyse data. In contrast, methodology is 'the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes' (Crotty, 2003, p.3). In an interpretive paradigm, qualitative methodology is typically used with qualitative techniques, including ethnography, case study analysis and document analysis (Jennings, 2010). Qualitative research methodology is considered as: 'Any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification' (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.17), and

The label qualitative method has no precise meaning in any of the social sciences. It is an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less

naturally occurring phenomena in the social world (Van Maanen, 1983, p.9).

Investigation of how people make sense of, or interpret social phenomena (rather than the identification and prediction of causal relationships), is the focus of this methodology (Willig, 2008). As a result, data is typically collected in close proximity to a local setting for a sustained period of time (Miles & Huberman, 1994) by using in-depth interviews and observation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) to achieve a rich description of the social world from a small group of participants (Patton, 1990). Summarising the nature of qualitative research, Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p.8) state that:

The word qualitative implies an emphasis on the quality of entities and on process and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured (if measured at all) in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency. Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. Such researchers emphasise the value-laden nature of inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning.

This study does not employ a positivist paradigm, as the data cannot be quantified and the methods of the natural sciences cannot be applied to such research material (Denscombe, 2010). Instead of getting inside the world of those

generating realities, positivists start their research by developing hypotheses from theory concerning causal relationships and then testing and verifying them with experimental and quantitative methods (Jennings, 2010). Thus, the results from a representative sample of participants are considered to be true or and can be generalised to the whole population or to other similar situations (Ryan, 2006).

This research follows a qualitative methodological approach, which can provide contextual information and a rich insight into human behaviour (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), based upon the exploration and construction of multiple realities of a social issue. In using qualitative methodology, holistic, rich and in-depth description of the interpretation of local stakeholders towards sustainable tourism can be achieved. Furthermore, the complex, interrelated source material of this research is multifaceted and dynamic, and thus cannot be captured in quantitative research.

The ‘emic’ perspective used by a qualitative study can support the researcher to better understand how and why local stakeholders make sense of and interpret sustainable tourism, and the interrelationship and interaction between sustainable tourism and them. Thus, this research adopted a case study approach using a combination of qualitative data collection methods, including semi-structured interviews, observations, and official documents.

5.1.3a The case study

A case study, which is believed to be suitable in seeking to understand complicated, dynamic, and multidimensional contemporary phenomena (Yin,

2014) is employed in this research. It is defined as ‘an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context’ (Yin, 2014, p.16). Eisenhardt (1989, p.534) describes the case study method as, ‘A research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings.’ As Yin (2014, p.11) states, ‘the case study's unique strength is its ability to deal with full variety of evidence – documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations’. Although often considered to be related, case studies and qualitative research are not the same thing (Biemans, 2003). A case study approach is a research strategy, not a kind of evidence, and can entail both quantitative and qualitative data (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2014). Case studies concentrate on an individual, a group, a community, an organisation, a programme, or even a situation or an incident (Ary *et al.*, 2010), with the aim of attaining a holistic, in-depth description and understanding of real life in that particular case, and the relationships and/or processes of that life that occur in that specific case (Denscombe, 2010).

As the main aim of this research is to gain a holistic, rich and in-depth understanding of the interpretations of local stakeholders in Baria-Vungtau Province, Vietnam, employing the case study approach in this study is appropriate: the researcher was able to focus all his efforts on one case, thus investigating the issues deeply, and finding out how the various elements of the phenomenon influence one another (Denscombe, 2010).

According to Yin (2014) there are six sources of evidence that can be employed within a case study: (1) documentation; (2) archival records; (3) interviews; (4) participant observation; (5) direct observation; and (6) physical artefacts.

Denscombe (2010) and Willig (2008) advise that research should use various data collection methods. Ghauri (2004) also suggests using various sources of data collection in case study research, to attain the depth and focus on the research objects which characterise case research. Within this research, semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and official documents were used.

A formal case study protocol with the general rules and procedures should be created (Yin, 2014), as a means of making the data generated by the case study more reliable (*ibid.*). It should start with an overview of the case study project and include a letter of introduction for sending to the interview participants (included in Appendix 6). This section, which communicates to anyone that familiar with the case study's purpose and setting, lines out the rational for selecting the case and the issues being examined, plus an explanation of how the project is funded (Yin, 2014). In the second section of the protocol, which is concerned chiefly with operational issues and the overall effectiveness of data collection, the field procedures are outlined. These included accessing organisations and interview participants, and planning a clear schedule of data collection activities. In the final section of the protocol, the case study questions used to collect the data are outlined (included in Appendix 9). Yin (2014) notes that a prepared tentative report outline ensures that the collection of the relevant data is properly formatted.

According to Ghauri (2004), single cases are suitable when an established theory is to be explained or questioned; a single extreme or unique case to be understood; or when a previously inaccessible revelatory case has been accessed. Willig (2008) adds that when the case is of intrinsic interest to the researcher, or represents a test-case for existing theories, a single case study should be used. For multiple or comparative case studies, Ghauri (2004, p.114) explains that ‘we ask or study the same questions in a number of organisations and compare them with each other to draw conclusions’ – none of which applies to this research. Thus, multiple case studies are suitable when phenomena are compared in a systematic way, to explore different dimensions of research issues, or examine different levels of research variables (Ghauri, 2004). Willig (2008) also notes that this approach should be used when a study aims to generate new theories. As this research does not seek to create new theories, multiple case studies are inappropriate. Besides, by using a single case study approach, the researcher can focus on researching a particular case in greater detail.

The case study for the research should be a complex functioning unit; appropriate for research in its natural context with a multitude of methods; and contemporary (Johansson, 2003). In addition, this research employed an intrinsic case study rather than instrumental or collective case study (Stake, 1995). According to Stake (1995), an intrinsic case study should be chosen because it is interesting in its own right, which describes Baria-Vungtau Province, Vietnam. Although the region wants to develop sustainable tourism, there are still a lot of problems to be addressed. The environment is polluted by tourism industry, and economic aspects

such as seasonality, leakage of money and tourism dependence remain unresolved. Furthermore, congestion, social evils and the commercialisation of traditions are socio-cultural issues (see Introduction).

5.2 Sample and sampling techniques

Non-random sampling (i.e. non-probabilistic sampling) is considered appropriate for this study, which follows the interpretive paradigm using a qualitative approach (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). As qualitative research requires rich information that provide more valuable insight for the issues being studied, rather than a large number of respondents (Willig, 2008), participants should be carefully selected. Purposive sampling and snowball sampling are chosen for this study so that the data are richer and more useful (Suri, 2011). The participants consist of three groups: local citizens, local businesspeople and local government.

5.2.1 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling is a targeted research method which includes participants and other empirical materials that are relevant to the research focus (Jennings, 2012). Patton (2002), frequently cited as an authority on purposeful sampling, provides a comprehensive discussion of purposive sampling as below:

The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling. Studying

information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations (Patton, 2002, p.230).

In purposive sampling, the selected people are assumed to be already known by the researcher as qualified and with a great deal of valuable insight and information about the research questions (Denscombe, 2010). To select the right participants, several points have to be kept in mind, such as the size, nature and accessibility of the population of interest (Jennings, 2010). In this study, the following criteria were used to select participants:

1. Citizen of Baria-Vungtau Province;
2. Aged over 18 years for reasons of access and ethics;
3. In regular contact with tourists or working within tourism industry (state or private organisations);
4. Interested in the tourism industry of the area; and
5. Informants from the tourism industry must have been working in the industry for at least ten years.

For the first group of stakeholders, local people are chosen because their lives and livelihoods can be affected by the tourists, and reciprocally they directly influence the experiences of tourists. For the second (which includes local tourism businesspeople) and third (local authority) groups, people working in either local private or state-owned tourism organisations are suitable for study. They certainly have important roles in the development of sustainable tourism. The informants included in the local citizen group must have an interest in tourism, such as its development and contribution to the development of the region, as without these they may have little to say. Nevertheless, it was also recognised that this

technique may encounter the hazard of sampling homogenous groups with similar experiences (Jordan & Gibson, 2003). To avoid sampling 'like-minded' interviewees, participants were sourced from a diversity of networks. Once the networks were established, semi-structured interviews and participant observation methods were employed.

5.2.2 Snowball sampling

Snowballing will also be used as a way to meet more subjects that meet the criteria for inclusion in the research. With the snowball sampling method, the researcher can identify the right individuals to be interviewed, who later help the researcher find others in the population with the same characteristics (Crouch, 2005; McNeill & Chapman, 2005). This process will be continued until data saturation is met (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Furthermore, snowball sampling also helps the researcher overcome the constraint of access.

5.2.3 Sampling size

Mason (2010) states that samples for qualitative studies tend to be much smaller than those in quantitative studies. One of the reasons for this is that 'one occurrence of a piece of data, or a code, is all that is necessary to ensure that it becomes part of the analysis framework' (Mason, 2010, pp.1-2). Furthermore, De Gagne and Walters (2010) argue that an appropriate sample size in qualitative research is completely dependent on the judgment and experience of the researcher in assessing the quality of the collected data. As a result, in this study, the researcher will not predetermine the exact sample size or number of

interviewees. Data collection will be undertaken until data saturation and redundancy are achieved – that is, no new categories or themes emerge from the data collected (Marshall, 1996).

5.3 Data collection methods

Different types of data-gathering qualitative research methods were employed. By using many data sources from different methods to illuminate the same objective matter, internal validity can be increased (Bonoma, 1985). Further, using a combination of methods to collect data serves as a means of 'perceptual triangulation', which allows the weaknesses and bias in one method to be compensated for by strengths in another, and generate '*further data* that might shed light on things' (Denscombe, 2010, p.142). Semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and official documents were used in this research. Each method is discussed in turn in this section.

5.3.1 Semi-structured Interviews

As the root of interviewing someone is an interest in exploring the experience of that person and the meaning he or she makes of that experience (Seidman, 1998), this method is considered the most appropriate to collect qualitative data. There are three popular forms of interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Denscombe, 2010) which have their own strengths and weaknesses and should be carefully chosen between.

In a structured interview, the most rigid format, a predetermined list of questions and limited options in terms of answers are used to elicit information (Denscombe, 2010). This method is suitable for researchers who have fairly solid ideas about the issues they want to study during the interview (Merriam, 2001). Semi-structured interviews are less rigid as they involve the implementation of some of predetermined questions, but other new questions may be used to explore further and seek clarification of the issues (Jennings, 2010). Unstructured interviews are far less rigid: the interviewers may only have some questions in mind rather than preparing them in advance (Tappen, 2011). The questions are not based on a guide, but are generally generated during the course of field research (*ibid.*).

Bearing in mind these characteristics, semi-structured interviews are deemed most appropriate for this study. Semi-structured interviews can be used to interact with the stakeholders and achieve deeper perspectives from the participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This approach is most widely used to collect data in qualitative research (Willig, 2008) as it can provide a considerable amount of high quality data in a fairly short time (Carey, 2013). Structured interviews are not suitable for this study because the concept of sustainable tourism may be new to the participants and to meet the aims and objectives of the research, more questions may be needed to clarify new or under-developed opinions. Further, the employment of unstructured interviews is not appropriate for this study either, as questions can be generated from the theoretical framework in advance. Semi-structured interviews have the potential to enable the researcher to gather ‘rich’

data (Carey, 2013), clarify questions and probe the issues being studied (Babbie, 1990). If the respondents answer ambiguously or too briefly, the researcher can ask follow-up questions to clarify (Myers, 2013) or give an example related to that specific issue (Carey, 2013). This type of interview also matches well with the interpretive paradigm (Jennings, 2010).

Whilst the use of semi-structured interviews is appropriate to this study, its limitations are also considered. A summary of the strengths and weaknesses of this type of interviews according to Marshall and Rossman (1989) is presented in Table 5.1. Jennings (2010) mentions the issue of replication, as the researcher and the researched can socially interact differently at different times due to time of day, research setting and social situations around them. Furthermore, a researcher tends not to know whether interviewees are always telling the ‘truth’ about their experiences, for reasons unknown to the interviewer (Carey, 2013). To overcome these limitations, the researcher had to carefully consider the interview transcripts for possible inconsistencies when he interpreted the data and different methods can be used to ensure reliability and validity.

Table 5.1: Strengths and Weaknesses of Semi-Structured Interviews (Adapted from Marshall & Rossman 1989)	
Strengths	Weaknesses

Useful way to get large amounts of data quickly	Relies on cooperation
Allows for a wide variety of information and a large number of topics to be covered	Respondents may not be willing to share all the necessary information
Allows for immediate follow-up questions for clarification	Concerns about data quality due to personal biases of interviewer
Combined with other techniques, allows researcher to check description against fact	Large amounts of data may be difficult to process

5.3.2 Participant observation

As interviewees are not always able to express their experiences and feelings, participant observation can help (Goulding, 2000). According to Bell (2005), participant observation refers to taking part in the activities of people in the social setting being studied, in order to listen, observe, interact and understand their lives and culture. Participant observation as used in qualitative research was categorised into four forms by Junker (1960): the ‘complete observer’, the ‘observer as participant’, the ‘participant as observer’, and the ‘complete participant’. ‘Complete observer’ refers to researcher who does not interact with people, while the ‘complete participant’ functions fully as a member of the social setting without revealing his or her real identity to its members. These two types are similar in that the role of a researcher remains unknown to the people being investigated. ‘Observer as participant’ and ‘participant as observer’ share similar characteristics in that members of the social setting are aware of the researcher's

role. Nonetheless, in the former, the interaction between a researcher and the respondents is very little, while in the latter, a researcher engages in regular interaction with the group members and takes part in their daily activities.

In using this method to collect data, Denscombe (2010) argues that researcher must endeavour to preserve the naturalness of the social setting being investigated and should avoid affecting the phenomena in that setting, whichever of the four roles a researcher selects. 'Observer as participant' was chosen here because the researcher realised that it would be impossible to be covert about his role as a researcher while using other data collection methods such as semi-structured interviews. It helps him retain the naturalness of the setting and access situations and data which otherwise would be out of reach (Denscombe, 2010).

Participant observation was chosen for this research to compensate for other methods' weaknesses. For instance, semi-structured interviews and focus groups only allow a researcher to gain the data on what people say, not what people actually do in the real-world setting, and data on what actually and normally happens in the social setting being studied is collected through observation (Carey, 2013). Moreover, as participant observation relies on 'the direct evidence of the eye to witness events first hand', this method is a more direct way to gain an insider's point of view, which enables the researcher to recognise hidden aspects of issues being investigated (Denscombe, 2010, p.196). Additionally, this method could enable the researcher to become immersed in the social setting of interest and provide an opportunity to observe how the informants construct and

interpret their meanings and knowledge of the issues being investigated (Jennings, 2010).

Besides supporting other methods, Jennings (2010) points out the limitation of participant observation, which lies in the fact that it may not capture all the data from a large group of respondents who may not be in one place at all times. As a researcher can only be in one place at a time, he may lose valuable data which he could have obtained from observing other groups. This limitation applies to this research, as three different groups of informants were approached (local citizens, tourism businesspeople and the local government) and they could not be observed at the same time. As a result, one group was observed at a time. Furthermore, Jennings (2010) also warns that researcher may encounter the problem of being biased and thus phenomena may be misinterpreted. Nevertheless, with the use of other methods and the exercise of researcher reflexivity, this limitation was overcome.

5.3.3 Official documents

According to Kelly (2006, p.316), official documents are very useful in all forms of qualitative research and as the researcher does not have to ‘think on his feet’ as in an interview, nor engage in the tiresome process of transcribing after the interviews, these resources are in some ways easier to collect and process. As the research objectives and research question served the basis for what documents were chosen (Flick, 2009), the particular documents relevant for this research are the official documents issued by the local governments of Baria-Vungtau

Province, specifically the People's Committee of Baria-Vungtau Province and The Department of Culture-Sports and Tourism. These documents document how local leaders interpret sustainable development and what they have done for the industry in the area. The criteria for data collection were as below:

1. Official documents related to development of tourism in the province;
2. Related documents such as action plans for implementing those documents; and
3. Feedback documents from local tourism business to local government.

All the documents were reviewed to identify relevant data for the research. These data helped the researcher reduce uncertainty about the data collected from the semi-structured interviews, as some data could not be offered by local government in the interviews. Using these published documents as a reference, the researcher then could investigate how and why tourism development is being conducted in the region, and whether or not it is sustainable.

It was considered that the researcher's notions and reflections might steer the analysis when reading the documents, and that this could lead to possible limitation of this research method, which may weaken the reliability of the findings (Jupp, 2006). To avoid this, the researcher tried to keep himself as neutral as possible while analysing the data.

5.4 Ethical considerations

When carrying out research, ethical considerations are very important. Within the nature of this research, there were the researcher's participation, interaction and establishment of rapports with a variety of stakeholders for a constant period of time, which led to ethical concerns adding up to a daily consideration of the researcher (Jorgensen, 1989). Besides, 'ethical considerations have a particular resonance in qualitative research studies' (Lewis, 2003, p.66). Acknowledging this importance, the study was conducted strictly based on ethical practice which was addressed in Research Ethics Scrutiny (see Appendix 5). To support ethical considerations, letter of consent (see Appendix 7) was sent to the interviewees.

The letter of consent explained the purpose of the study and informed participants that they could withdraw at any time during the interview process. The participations could ask any questions that they were not clear about the research. The researcher also explained that participants were not required to answer any question that made them uncomfortable. They were also informed about the anonymity and confidentiality of their information and the way their information would be secured and used in the thesis.

In brief, during the whole period of the fieldwork, including the initial pilot study period, the researcher always bore in mind and strictly consider ethical considerations. Anybody who did not want to participate in this research could withdraw at any time. The purpose of the research was clearly declared wherever necessary and no fake claims were made.

5.5 The research process

This part discusses the use of the above methods in the pilot and main study of the research.

5.5.1 Pilot study

To be well prepared for the main research phase a pilot study in the fieldwork area was implemented. It is important to use the pilot study as a kind of feasibility study, i.e. ‘small scale version[s], or trial run[s], done in preparation for the major study’ (Polit *et al.*, 2001, p.467) as well as a way to pre-test or ‘try out’ a particular research instrument (Baker, 1994, pp.182-3). The researcher contacted potential interviewees to build a network of relevant stakeholders for the main study. It also offered an opportunity to practice interview skills with strangers and to become aware of difficulties that may occur during data collection. It also meant the research methods and instruments could be pre-tested and their suitability for data collection assessed. The pilot study, conducted in July 2013, embraced: networking and identifying the key stakeholders and gate-keepers; a trial of the interview method to make sure that the questions are clear and unambiguous; and some initial data collection.

To prepare for the pilot study, the researcher contacted some of the relevant stakeholders that were willing to be interviewed. Some of them are friends working for tourist companies, for Baria-Vungtau Province Department of Culture, Sport and Tourism and are local residents that usually encounter tourists in the region. As they introduced other relevant stakeholders, the network began

to grow wider. As some of them are friends of the researcher, they are willing to cooperate, the interviews were more informal and the data collected tended to be more reliable. The problem was these stakeholders were quite busy at the time of the pilot study. Sometimes it was hard to reach them or they changed their mind about participating in the research. They found it uncomfortable to be recorded, as they thought that the records might be used for aims other rather than the research. Nevertheless, the researcher managed to solve this by trying to adapt to their amended schedule or replacing them by others. This problem, which has been warned about by Becker (1973), occurred again in the main study and was not easy to cope with.

The researcher contacted fifteen local citizens initially, who have regular contact with tourists and mainly live around the beaches and resort areas, to ask permission to interview them for the study, ten of whom were available or willing to take part. Five tourist companies were chosen for the pilot study, but only three agreed to participate due to the high season of tourism in the area during the pilot study. Stakeholders from local government were not interviewed in the pilot stage due to the unavailability of the relevant people. The interviews took place in cafes that were convenient for the interviewees and were all recorded by audio recorder with the participants' permission. Following the pilot study, several of the interviewees agreed to participate in the main study, and were also willing to introduce relevant stakeholders for the future interviews, as in snowball sampling.

During the pilot interviews, some issues occurred that had to be resolved. First, as the questions had been written in English, it was sometimes difficult to express the questions in Vietnamese, even though the researcher is Vietnamese. The questions were edited by some interviewees to make sure that they kept the meaning the researcher required but were easier to understand in Vietnamese. This step is important as it makes the interviews more efficient. Secondly, the pilot study demonstrated that some questions were too general and needed to be subdivided to make it easier for interviewees to answer. As a result, the questions were redesigned and it was much easier to use them in interview. Thirdly, while it was quite simple to work with local citizens who had regular contact with tourists, it was more complicated to work with tourist companies and the Baria-Vungtau Province Department of Culture, Sport and Tourism. For tourist companies, some of them had directors or vice-directors to deal with external affairs. This made accessing the right people more complicated, as the researcher do not know exactly who to contact in the first instance. For Baria-Vungtau Province Department of Culture, Sport and Tourism, only the Deputy Director and the Chief Officer can undertake the interview under the rules of the organisation, but these two VIPs are very busy and could only be accessed by making an appointment a month in advance.

Establishing rapport with the interviewees was very important, as it helped the researcher maintain an emic position, allowing him to ask questions in more informal way and make the interviews flow better. More information tended to be collected and it was more openly discussed. To improve and maintain an emic

position, the researcher reminded the interviewees that he is also a citizen of the region, and used his knowledge about the region to establish a rapport with the interviewees at the beginning of each interview, for instance, the area where the participant was living or current events within the region.

In brief, the pilot study was very helpful as preparation for the main study. Firstly, the researcher could identify potential respondents, who also recommended other people that fit all the criteria for the interviews. Secondly, the pilot study helped identify the most suitable times and places for the main study. The specific study field area (Vungtau City and Longhai Town, which are busy with tourists) and time frames (December-April, the low tourism season of the area so that interviewees have more time to participate) for the research fieldwork were selected. Thirdly, during the pilot study, the researcher practised his interview skills and built up a rapport with the interviewees. Finally, practical issues were considered, such as places for the interviews (some cafés were not suitable as they were too noisy), time of day (some may prefer not to go out at night, especially the women), etc. and thus all things were ready before the main study took place.

The pilot study also suggested that one criterion for selecting the participants for the interviews should be added. The local tourism businesspeople should have been working in the region for at least ten years, to ensure the quality of the data collected from experienced participants. In addition, from observation, those working in large and well-developing businesses tend to be more passionate and knowledge on the issues of the region. Finally, it was found that the questions

should be sent to the informants in advance so that they can prepare for the interview. This can help to save time in the interview.

5.5.2 The main study

The main study was conducted between 1st December 2013 and 15th April 2014, following the changes proposed in the pilot study. During this period, the researcher stayed in Baria-Vungtau Province, in Vungtau City or Longhai Town, the two busiest tourist areas of the province. By collecting data from these two areas, the data are richer and more reliable. Based on the outcomes of the pilot study conducted in July 2013, networking and identifying the key stakeholders and gate-keepers proved very useful for the main study. Further, more networks were built during the main study to enhance the robustness of data. Some new questions were created to collect the data in the field more easily. Specific study areas, Vungtau City and Longhai Town, were selected for the fieldwork. These two areas, where most of the tourism organisations are located, are busy with tourists and thus stakeholders encounter tourists most frequently.

(i) Semi-structured interviews

In general, the interviewees and data collection for this study took the following steps:

1. Approaching stakeholders and ask for contacts;
2. Gaining contacts and asking them to participate;
3. Continuing the snowballing with contacts to gain more stakeholders if necessary; and

4. Ensuring a diversity of contacts by widening the profile of persons involved in the snowballing exercise.

Three groups of stakeholders the semis-structured interviews were:

1. Local citizens who regularly meet the tourists visiting the region;
2. People from local tourism industry sectors such as accommodation, attractions, food and beverage services, transportation, destination management organisations; and
3. The local authorities.

Twenty-nine local citizens, ten people from tourism companies and one local leader, who were sourced from a diversity networks, were interviewed individually, using semi-structured interviews. The demographic information of the interviewees is listed in Appendix 8. Places and times for the interview were chosen by the participants. All local citizens chose to be interviewed at cafes, while people from tourism companies and the local leader decided to meet at their offices.

Interviewees were sent the invitation letters via email or telephone, in which the researcher briefly explained the content and objectives of the study. The researcher and those who accepted the invitation then arranged a convenient time and place to carry out the interview. Then, interviewees were sent a letter of consent and the interview question forms one or two weeks before so that they were well-prepared. The researcher provided a letter of consent for every

participant to read and sign before contributing to the study. For the purposes of confidentiality, all the participants' names have been coded and all the data were secured to ensure the privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of the participants.

Finally, the researcher conducted an official interview, in which interviewees usually complete all questions within sixty minutes. The interviews were carried out in Vietnamese and translated into English later. The interviews were recorded by the researcher and transcribed later, an example of which is presented in Appendix 10. Upon the arrival of the interviewees, informal conversations were used to create a friendly atmosphere. Some issues regarding current affairs were mentioned by the researcher to strengthen his emic position. The researcher believed that one of the main reasons that he gained good cooperation from the interviewees was that he was introduced to them by reliable people, as well as the establishment of the emic position and rapport before the interviews.

(ii) Focus groups

Focus groups are rich sources of qualitative data and can provide information about a range of ideas and feelings that individuals have about certain issues, as well as illuminating the differences in perspective between groups of individuals (Rabiee, 2004). It was intended that interviews would be conducted within each stakeholder group as they share similar socio-characteristics and would be comfortable talking to each other (Richardson & Rabiee, 2001). Furthermore, Krueger (2000) believes rich data can only be generated if the participants engage fully in the discussion, and thus advocates the use of homogenous groups: the

participants should share similar characteristics such as gender, age-range, ethnic and social background. However, within oriental culture, where people tend to conform to group norms (Pham, 2014), focus groups could hinder the data collection process. People tend to 'keep face' and data may be biased and deficient. Generation gaps and age-related respect also creates conflicts between the participants and makes the younger people reluctant to speak openly. It was also difficult to meet together at a particular place and time as they all were too busy. As a result, the idea of a focus group was ultimately abandoned.

(iii) Participant observation

Participant observation was employed to reduce cases in which participants could not express their ideas (Goulding, 2000). The behaviours of the informants were observed in the form of 'observer as participant' as categorised by Junker (1960), in which the respondents were aware of the researcher's identity and the researcher had regular interactions with the respondents. While observing the informants, it was found that having informal conversations also helped the researcher collect additional information not mentioned in the interviews.

The researcher noticed that as the semi-structured interviews might be taken in a formal atmosphere, some informants tended to avoid giving negative answers about the policies of local authorities. For instance, some people from tourism companies spoke about such policies only in a positive way during interview, but later in informal conversations, they said they thought the policies had not been implemented well.

The main challenge that the researcher faced when using this method is that he had to move around to test the information provided by the interviewees. Despite this difficulty, this method was used as part of the triangulation. It helped to fortify the data collected and make them more reliable.

5.5.3 Data Analysis

The process of qualitative analysis was undertaken as soon as the data were collected to ensure that the emergent data and all possible explanations of the issues were investigated in an evolutionary way (Jennings, 2010). Denscombe (2010) notes that, in qualitative inquiries, the stages between data collection and data analysis are overlapping to some degree, rather than separate from one another.

In qualitative research, to analyse the data, researchers use an inductive approach to transform the data collected into meaningful knowledge associated with the phenomenon of interest (Denscombe, 2010). Qualitative data analysis is defined as ‘working with data, organising them, breaking them into manageable units, coding them, synthesizing them, and searching for patterns’ (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p.159).

Thematic analysis was used in this research. Braun and Clarke (2006, p.79) define this analysis approach as ‘a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data’. They also introduce six phases of the thematic data

analysis process: (i) become familiar with the data; (ii) generating initial codes; (iii) searching for themes; (iv) reviewing themes; (v) defining and naming themes; and (vi) producing the report (see Appendix 11).

The collected data were first reviewed and then grouped manually into topics, key themes and central research objectives. To deal with the volume of data, content analysis was employed. Analysis started with simply identifying the common themes of the data. In this initial phase, similar meanings or themes were identified rather than just counting the emergences of specific words, as implemented in classical content analysis (Carney, 1979). The formation of appropriate themes was considered crucial at this stage. A new category was generated for any emergent issues which did not belong to any existing themes. As recommended by other researchers, a second reading of the data and new reflections may lead the researcher to discover new dimensions which may generate new categories or revise existing ones (Berelson, 1971). The result of this analysis will be reported in chapters 6 and 7.

The rationale for employing thematic analysis is that it is flexible and accessible and can contribute to the generation of interpretively rich data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As thematic analysis is not attached to any particular theoretical or epistemological approach, it provides an accessible and flexible technique for qualitative data analysis and as a consequence, it can be used across different theoretical frameworks (*ibid.*).

5.6 Technique issues

Methods for recording interviews for documentation and later analysis include audiotape recording, videotape recording and note-taking (Johnson, 2002; Rubin & Rubin, 2005; Kvale, 1996). The most common way to record interviews is with a digital recorder, which can easily be saved on computer later on. Maintaining high-quality digital recordings can prevent difficulties later in the research process.

5.7 Data Transcription and Member-Checking

After completion of the interviews, the recorded data were transferred from portable digital recorders to computer disks. An independent legal transcriptionist transcribed the data from the digital recordings to Microsoft Word documents. Following completion of the transcription, member-checking (Creswell, 2009) was used to ensure the validity of the data obtained. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), member-checking is the single most important means for improving validity in qualitative study. For this study, individual interviewees received a copy of the transcribed text of their interviews and were asked to review the contents of the transcripts and make changes or revisions that more clearly reflected their viewpoints.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed and analysed the theoretical, methodological and practical issues that were used to shape the research approach. First of all, the philosophical approach was presented with an affirmation of the interpretive and

qualitative approach. Next, ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions, which were used to guide this research, were analysed. Regarding data collection methods, interpretive ethnography and the associated use of semi-structured interviews and participant observation were used.

The chapter also presented the snowball research sampling technique. This technique helps to collect richer and more useful data, as well as save time by choosing informed and willing people for interviews. Next, an explanation of the data collection procedures undertaken in the research was presented. Regarding the establishment of credibility of the results, the chapter explored the processes of ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research. Finally, the chapter discussed the use of thematic analysis, which was used to analyse the data generated from the research and how emerging themes were classified into themes and sub-themes.

Chapter Six:

Local Stakeholders' Interpretations of Sustainable Tourism and Current Policies

6.0 Introduction

The collected data was analysed using thematic analysis to identify the key thematic interpretations of sustainable tourism held by local stakeholders. The aims of this chapter are to present these interpretations, along with their opinions of current policies supporting sustainable tourism in the region.

6.1 Local stakeholders' interpretations of sustainable tourism

Six key themes of the meaning of sustainable tourism were identified by locals, as displayed in Figure 6.1. Three of these were generic to the local citizens and local tourism businesspeople: (i) tourism that includes environmental and natural resource protection and conservation; (ii) tourism that optimises use of regional resources; and (iii) tourism with careful land-use planning. In addition, two key themes were generic to local tourism businesspeople and local authorities: (iv) tourism with shared economic benefits for local stakeholders; and (v) tourism that focusses both natural environment and socio-cultural aspects. Finally, one key theme emerged from the local citizens: (vi) tourism that can receive more tourists and increase the investment return rate. Each of these interpretations is presented in the following sections.

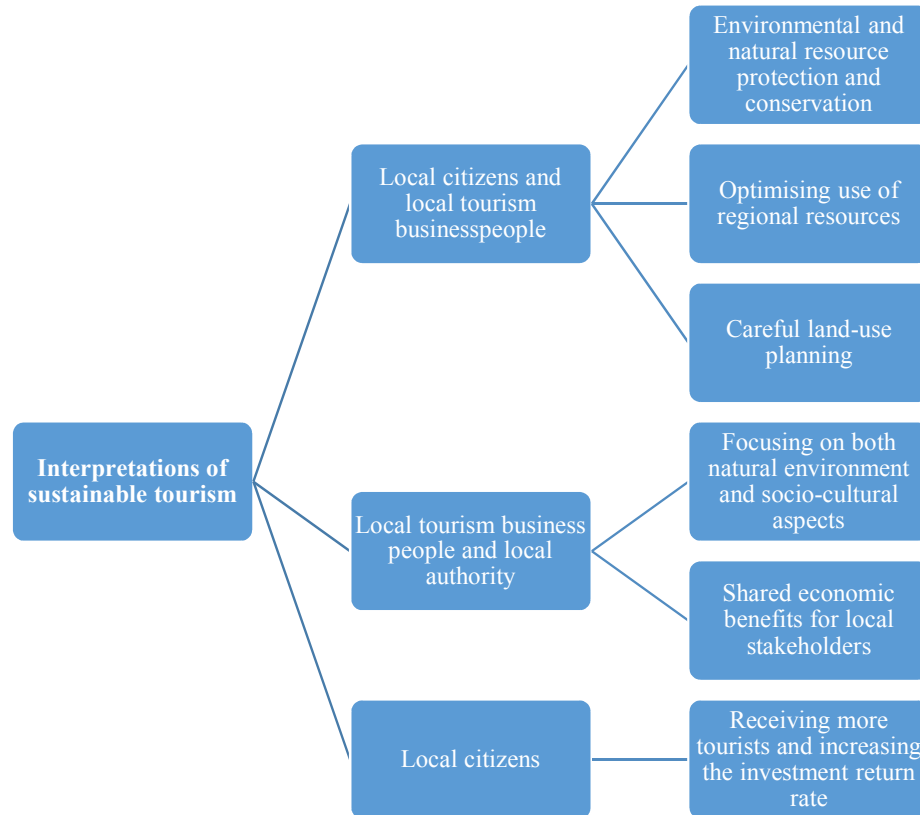


Figure 6.1: Main themes of stakeholders' interpretations of sustainable tourism

6.1.1 Environmental and natural resource protection and conservation

Protecting the environment and natural resources for present and future generations was mentioned by most local citizens and tourism businesspeople when they discussed sustainable tourism in their region. This was expressed in phrases such as “protect the environment and natural resources”, “conserve natural environment”, “the environment should be protected”, “minimise the impact of tourism on natural environment” and “maintaining and ensuring the conservation of natural resources and the environment”.

When asked why they located the natural environment at the root of their interpretations on sustainable tourism, five main sub-themes emerged: (i) the tourism industry depends on the quality of the natural environment; (ii) tourism in the region is based mostly on natural resources rather than cultural or historical sites; (iii) tourism development in the region is harmful to the natural environment; (iv) nature is being polluted by tourists and local populations; and (v) the processing of waste by tourism businesses is not seriously considered.

The tourism industry cannot sustain itself without the natural resources, which were mentioned in the interpretations of sustainable tourism by many local citizens and tourism businesspeople. They acknowledged the importance of the natural environment in the survival of tourism industry and noted that any plans for tourism must seriously consider the natural environment. They also mentioned that some areas in the region were better managed and the natural environment in those areas was better protected and improved; and thus, those areas received more tourists. Specifically, some beaches in Longhai Town were mentioned.

Local citizen 19, who is from Longhai Town, stated:

About 10 years ago, the awareness of the local citizens living near the beaches, especially the people from fishing villages, was very low. They threw rubbish on the beaches after their fishing trips from the sea and there was even human waste. The local authority has tried hard to keep the beaches clean and told them not to act that way. After a long time of advising local populations to keep the beaches clean as well as having

more staff to clean and protect the beaches, the local authority have made the beaches cleaner and can attract more tourists to enjoy their weekends or holidays.

Several local citizens also worry about air pollution in the province, which may negatively affect sustainable tourism in the region. This is caused by fishing villages: bad smells from the fish, which are untidily gathered, dried on pavements and transported to markets, pollute the air. Additionally, the water from fish trucks makes the area filthy and pollutes the air as well. Although the local citizens in these specific areas are used to these smells, tourists and people from other areas are not. The bad smells not only cause problems in small areas, but also to neighbouring areas when the wind blows. As these areas are near some tourist sites, air pollution may be negatively affecting tourism.

This issue leads to a consideration of the compatibility of tourism and fishing in the region, also a crucial industry for people before the emergence of tourism in the province. With a long coastline of more than 300km, a major fishery hub to serve the south-eastern fishing grounds for six provinces

(namely Binh Duong, Binh Phuoc, Dong Nai and Tay Ninh, Ho Chi Minh City and the region itself) was established in the province. Nonetheless, to maintain and develop tourism in the region, fishing villages must be better managed.

Fishermen must be encouraged to protect the natural environment by keeping the villages clean and tidy and reducing the air pollution they cause. By keeping the area clean and tidy, the locals' health is improved while air pollution is reduced,

and thus industries such as tourism are impacted less. Fishermen also benefit directly from tourism by selling seafood to tourists, and earn more money as retailers than they do when selling to middlemen or supplying raw materials for restaurants or hotels as wholesalers. Land-use planning also needs to be introduced. Techniques such as zoning should be employed to ensure hotels or resorts areas are not juxtaposed close to fishing areas, especially the drying areas and transportation routes of fish-carrying trucks. Tourists should also be guided away from polluted areas if they do not intend to visit fishing villages.

Beside the quality of the natural environment, tourism in the region is based mostly on natural resources. Most tourists come to enjoy the beach, natural hot springs and seafood. Although there are many cultural and historical sites in Baria-Vungtau Province, they are not as attractive as those in nearby regions, and thus they do not receive much tourist attention. As recognised by most local citizens and local tourism businesspeople, natural resources, especially the beaches, are the strength of Baria-Vungtau tourism industry. The manager of Tourist Company 5 mentioned this in interview:

We have natural resources such as beaches, forest, hot springs, and good infrastructure such as accommodation systems, restaurants and streets and so on to develop the tourism of the area. People are coming to enjoy mostly the beaches and seafood in the area. Other tourist sites such as historical sites and traditional craft villages do not attract tourists much. We still rely heavily on natural resources to develop tourism in the region.

Beside the beaches, local stakeholders also stressed the importance of natural hot springs, indigenous forests and seafood: the key natural resources that are the tourist attractions of the region. While local tourism businesspeople argued that if the local authority did not focus on nature conservation and the protection of natural resources, the tourism industry of the region would gradually decline, local citizens thought this was the responsibility of both local tourism businesses and the local authority. It is important that local people are aware that the natural environment can be threatened by inappropriate development. They will support the conservation of nature to protect natural resources, which are not only necessary for them to survive, but also for future generations. They also may advise others to do the same. With the support of local populations, the natural environment will be better protected and the area can still attract tourists.

While tourism brings economic benefits to the region as explained in Section 1.6, it is also destroying the natural environment. Local citizens recognised that the smoke and noise from vehicles and tourists also disturbed local populations when they rushed into the region on holidays or at weekends. When the areas become crowded with tourists, locals experience congestion around tourist sites such as beaches and resorts. As part of Asian culture, tourists tend to be very noisily talking and playing in these areas and causing noise pollution. Most local people are also tired of the lack of awareness of hygiene by tourists in public places. Most of the tourists visiting the region are domestic, tending to have low consciousness of environmental protection. For example, as these tourists usually

live in poor areas with poor living conditions, they tend not to keep their surroundings tidy. Therefore, although there are bins provided at tourist sites, they still litter, as mentioned below by local citizen 10:

I notice that there are many bins offered along the beaches and tourist sites. I think this is a good effort of the local authority to keep the region clean and tidy to support the development of tourism. However, rubbish is still everywhere around these sites after tourists having left. They do not leave waste in the provided bins but litter everywhere and make the areas filthy. This is really annoying to local populations. We are trying to protect the environment when some tourists are still destroying it.

Local citizens and business people mentioned that the natural environment was polluted not only by tourists, but also by local citizens. Daily activities of local people also generate waste. As a result, if they do not recognise that they have to keep the environment tidy, the region is still polluted regardless of tourism in the area. Furthermore, there were some areas where construction had been planned, but abandoned due to the economic crisis of 2008. Local people use them as waste-gathering areas and they are polluted. Moreover, people living along the coast and riverbanks tend to throw trash into the water. Most of these people do this unconsciously without considering that they are polluting their living environment, which will affect future generations. Furthermore, there are oilfields in the province, and oil is transported from those oilfields to other areas for

export. Sometimes, the oil is spilled into the sea; some beaches were impacted by oil spills, and it took time and effort to clean the polluted areas.

As all the above sources of pollution negatively affect the natural environment of the region, local citizens advised that there should be more policies and strategies from local government to improve the environmental consciousness of local stakeholders, so that the natural environment can be protected and used to satisfy more tourists visiting the region. This will create more benefits for local populations. Although not many local people benefit directly from ownership or employment in the tourism industry, they benefit from improved infrastructure, opportunities for education and access to health services, which have been funded through the tax revenues generated by the tourism industry.

Natural environment protection seems not to be seriously considered by local resorts, hotels and restaurants in the region. This issue may cause negative effects for the natural environment and sustainable tourism in the region. The natural environment of the province is being threatened by the waste processing systems from local tourism business. Several managers of travel companies claim that untreated waste water from many hotels and restaurants in the province are not adequately processed and discharged into the sea or rivers. A major challenge to solving this issue is the requirement for more capital investment for the processing systems, which either businesses do not have or do not want to invest in. If this problem is not suitably addressed, the natural environment of the region will be severely polluted, leading to the decline of the tourism industry in the area.

To protect the environment around their businesses and achieve the 'Green Lotus Label' certified by VNAT (Vietnam National Administration of Tourism), as introduced in Section 1.7.3, some hotels have invested in processing systems to treat waste from their businesses. The Green Lotus Label is a government initiative to develop sustainable tourism at national and local level. Local government also supports these initiatives by conducting random inspections of tourism businesses to minimise their negative environmental impacts, especially before public holidays such as Lunar New Year Holiday and Independence Day. This issue can also be solved by calling on foreign-owned resorts or hotels in the region to build processing systems. The local authority can use supportive policies to attract more foreign investment in environment protection to make tourism more sustainable.

6.1.2 Tourism that optimises the usage of available resources of the region

Living in a province where the tourism industry has been established for a long time, several local citizens and businesspeople feel that sustainable tourism optimises use of regional resources. This is akin to Saarinen's (2006) 'Tourism first' typology. They recognise that the region possesses many suitable elements to develop tourism, such as natural resources, historical sites, craft villages and annual festivals.

The tourism industry of the region is currently heavily reliant on the use of beaches, with most tourists taking day trips to enjoy the beaches with swimming,

sunbathing, picnics, fishing and so on. There is also a famous historical site in the region, the Con Dao Prison, but it is located on Con Dao Island, which necessitates a flight or long cruise journey. There should be more flights to carry tourists to the site. As local citizen 20 stated:

We have long and beautiful beaches. Besides, we have some historical sites, primitive forests, craft villages, hot springs. However, these sites are not interesting enough to attract more tourists as they have not been invested in and there are some similar attractions around the region. Most of the tourists coming to the area are domestic tourists. The region has not been an attractive site for international tourists. We have to invest more in other attractions beside the beach to attract more domestic as well as international tourists.

Many local citizens also noted that the local authority also felt frustrated over this issue. Although tourism has been established here for more than a hundred years, tourism services in the region are not diverse enough to satisfy the needs of tourists so that they can stay longer and spend more. There are a number of historic sites, temples, pagodas and communal houses that have received investment to serve tourists and introduce the unique features of the region, but they have not received the expected number of tourists. The local authority has invested in renovating them to attract tourists, but it seems that they are not yet attractive enough.

Furthermore, local companies thought that tourism sector had not developed well due to a lack of cooperation and unfair competition among tourist companies. For example, only certain tourist companies were allowed to bring tourists to Long Tan Battlefield. Additionally, some hotels and restaurants offered benefits to tour guides or drivers to bring tourists to their businesses, even though they provide a low level of service to tourists. If these problems continue, the tourism industry in the region will not attract more tourists and thus cannot be sustainable. As the manager of tourist company 6 has warned:

There is a lack of cooperation among the tourism companies. Unfair competition leads to many serious problems that cause stress to tourists. Scams make tourists angry for paying much more money than they expect to. A monopoly exists in some tourist sites like Long Tan, as just two companies can bring tourists to this site.

Tourists want to relax on their holidays, so they are unlikely to choose a destination that may cause stress or unnecessary expense to them, as mentioned above. Cooperation among tourist companies is important to satisfy their customers. A destination with wonderful attractions cannot be attractive to tourists unless the services in that area are also appealing.

6.1.3 Tourism with careful land-use planning

For several local citizens and tourism businesspeople in Baria-Vungtau Province, who notice the issues regarding the land-use of the tourism industry in the region,

sustainable tourism includes careful land-use planning. As they live near areas with tourism projects and sites, these local stakeholders recognise these issues. They mention issues of failed tourism projects, buildings put up without considering environmental issues and tourist attractions without plans for renovation and conservation.

There are some big tourism projects in the region that failed to finish. These projects cost up to thousands of millions of US dollars, and have great impact on local stakeholders in the region. When planning for the projects, land clearance affects many local citizens as they have to move out of the areas used for construction and were not compensated or helped to relocate somewhere else. Regarding land-use planning, participatory planning, one of the key themes in Agenda 21, was adopted by the UN (1992) to approach true sustainability by considering which local stakeholders need to be compensated. As the projects are halted, many local citizens face troubles with compensation. This impact will make land clearance difficult for future projects due to worries from local stakeholders of similar problems. For example, it may take longer to deal with local landowners, who may ask for higher prices and advance payment for their lands, afraid they may face similar problems to those experienced in unsuccessful projects.

Furthermore, environmental issues are not seriously considered when many buildings in the region (including hotels, resorts and restaurants) are constructed. Most of the areas surrounding these buildings are concrete and not many green

areas are created to compensate for the lost natural environment. Local citizens also criticised the fact that part of the beaches had been encroached upon to enlarge the road along the coastline, thus damaging the aesthetic of the area. They noted that some resorts and restaurants were built on the beaches, and parts of some beaches were used to build pavements. These actions may destroy the natural environment and make the areas less attractive, thus negatively affect tourism if they are not well planned and managed. Also, there is a need for more careful land-use planning and regulation of tourism. Local citizen 4 stated that:

Tourism infrastructure is unplanned and agriculture land as well as forest is destroyed for the construction of the tourism industry. Although the road along the beaches was enlarged, this construction destroyed the natural beauty of the area. The small hotels were built without being planned within the residential areas along the coast, in the hot springs and forest area. These buildings disturb the natural environment and break the balance of the ecological environment.

The above quotation reflects the local citizen's interpretation of sustainable tourism, in which land use should be planned carefully to make sure that other industries in the region, such as agriculture, forestry and so forth, are not negatively affected. If too much land used for tourism infrastructure is formerly from agriculture and/or forestry, food prices in the region may increase, while there will also be a risk of biodiversity loss due to the destruction of forest. Furthermore, there is also a risk of economic over-dependency on tourism due to

the loss of land. This interpretation can be linked to the suggestion of Saarinen (2006) that the recognition of negative effects, in this case, on economy and natural environment, and the need to manage them so that the targets of sustainable development can be reached, should be part of sustainable tourism.

6.1.4 Tourism with shared economic benefits for local stakeholders

While interacting with local citizens and tourists, some local tourism businesspeople and staff from the local authority felt that sustainable tourism shares economic benefits with local stakeholders. They stated that local products should be sold to tourists: this would not only make the tourism offer more distinctive, but local citizens would also benefit. Local people can earn money by supplying their products to tourist companies, or selling direct to tourists. Ensuring benefits for local populations in tourism activities is a crucial part of sustainable tourism. The manager of Tourism Company 1 stated:

I think we should focus more on local products to develop tourism in the region. It would be much better if local products from local farms are used to serve tourists, rather than importing those from other areas. This will create more jobs, bring more benefits for local stakeholders and narrow the gap between rich and poor, as it will somehow make the benefit distribution balanced. As a result, it may reduce social evils. Especially, this can also make tourism products of the region more unique as local specialties are used to serve tourists.

This comment reflects the intra-generation equity mentioned by Sharpley (2009) when he discussed the major principles underpinning sustainable development, manifested in the World Commission on Environment and Development's report *Our Common Future* (WCED, 1987). If more local products are used for local tourism, local citizens can earn directly or indirectly from tourism industry by selling their products to tourists or tourism businesses. As a result, leakage causing by buying food and other products from other regions also can be reduced. The gap between the rich and the poor can be narrowed when the benefits from tourism industry in the region can be shared equally among local citizens.

Managers from the tourism industry have introduced some local specialties, which could be used to attract tourists, such as seafood, local rice wine, local fruits, and handmade souvenirs. These souvenirs are made from available materials in the region, which are environmentally friendly and reflect the uniqueness of the region. Special local products are more attractive and unique.

In addition, the local authority and businesses also recognised that local stakeholders experience the enlargement of the gap between rich and poor, and the unfair distribution of benefits from the tourism industry. Although working in the same region, people indirect contact with tourists tend to work harder, but sometimes earn the same as, or even less than, tourism salespeople. Besides, many local stakeholders don't have the opportunity to work in tourism due to a shortage of knowledge and capital. Tourism in the region has generated many employment opportunities, but has not created good linkages, in particular with agriculture and

service-providing sectors. Tourists may not use local products and local guides, and thus only those that offer other products can benefit. The issue of intra-generation equity was highlighted in the Brundtland Report (1987), a very important part of sustainable development, which was later transferred to sustainable tourism's triple bottom line.

The local authority emphasised that, to develop tourism sustainably, there are at least four tasks to complete. Firstly, sustainable management is vital in any economic situation: environment protection and social activities need to be conducted in such a way as to minimise their negative effects. Secondly, economic and social benefits should be maximised for local communities with cooperation between local stakeholders, businesses and local authorities. Thirdly, negative effects on cultural and natural heritage should be minimised. Finally, negative effects on natural and social environments should be minimised.

6.1.5 Tourism that focusses on both environmental and socio-cultural aspects

With more interest in the tourism industry of the region, some tourism businesspeople and local authorities interpret sustainable tourism as having a focus on both the natural environment and socio-cultural aspects. Such people have been working in the industry for a long time and are leaders of the industry in the region.

Firstly, they mentioned the importance of the natural environment in the development of tourism. Their organisations tend to keep the areas in which they

do business tidy and train their staff to act responsibly towards the natural environment, through meetings, workshops and conferences. They do their best to minimise the effects of tourism from their business activities on the natural environment and propagandise others accordingly. The manager of company 8 stated:

Our company always tries the best to keep the area of the resort as clean as possible; because unless we do this, tourists will not come. The natural environment is vital to the tourism industry in any region of the world. We also cooperate with the local authority to propagandise about the protection of natural environment to local citizens as well as tourists coming to the area. Any activities that threaten the natural environment are not accepted in our company.

Natural resources and the environment were protected by current tourism businesses by not using natural resources spontaneously, keeping the area clean and tidy and persuading other local stakeholders to take good care of the natural environment. The industry should also encourage tourists to protect this vital cornerstone of the industry. During tours, information regarding protecting the environment can be delivered to tourists through tour guides or notices. Tourist companies also cooperate with local government to raise the consciousness of environmental protection to local citizens and support local government in assuring the protection of the natural environment in the region through their business activities.

Furthermore, socio-cultural aspects were also considered by local stakeholders when interpreting sustainable tourism. They recognised that although tourism brings economic benefits to the regions, such as job creation, foreign investment, exports and so on, many negative effects also emerged and many social-cultural problems were generated. Social evils, such as thieves, drugs and prostitution, are emerging. Local stakeholders are negatively affected by the activities of tourism industry with disturbance caused by tourists. While talking about socio-cultural aspects, the manager of tourist company¹ stated:

We are experiencing social evils like thieves, drugs and prostitution as many other tourist destinations do. To approach sustainable tourism in the region, these issues have to be minimised, then eliminated. Although they are not only the results of tourism industry, they make the region dangerous and may threaten tourists.

Although social evils can happen anywhere regardless of the existence of tourism industry, there is evidence that tourists are targeted by criminals in the region. Robberies occur in crowded areas during festivals, while drugs and prostitution tend to be popular wherever tourists are. Local authorities and businesses are doing their best to minimise the negative effects of tourism industry on socio-cultural aspects of the region. There are laws and policies to control the emerging problems caused by tourism. Certain actions have been implemented to help conserve historical sites, craft villages and traditional festivals. The region attracts

lots of pilgrimage tourists to attend traditional festivals in the area annually, such as Miss Fairy Festival, Ong Tran Festival, Whale Festival and this valuable heritage is well conserved.

6.1.6 Tourism that can receive more tourists and increase the investment return rate

For a small number of local citizens, sustainable tourism focuses on economic benefits. In their opinion, sustainable tourism can help them receive more tourists and increase the investment return rate. Although the number of these local citizens is small, their opinions reflect an important part of the interpretations of local citizens of sustainable tourism in the region.

According to local citizen 4, tourism in the region should insist on development that attracts as many tourists as possible. The industry should create goodwill by providing whatever tourists need to make them return. This will offer stable income and create more jobs for local citizens in the region. He thinks that natural resources in the region have not been used well for tourism industry and services are not good enough to attract and satisfy tourists, which in turn means the industry cannot be sustainable.

Citizen 6 advised that more recreation centres should be built. There are not many places for tourists in the region. Furthermore, price inflation should be controlled, as this annoys tourists. Although the region is naturally beautiful, services are not good enough for foreign tourists. This interpretation of sustainable tourism reveals

that this group of local citizens focuses more on the needs of tourism as an economic activity, and thus this is akin to the activity-based tradition of Saarinen (2006). In their view, tourism in the region has not been developed equivalent to the resources and strengths that the region possesses. Nevertheless, it may also reflect that they think tourism should be grown first, conserved later. At the moment, they want as many tourists as possible to create income for the local economy.

In conclusion, there are six different interpretations of sustainable tourism in Baria-Vungtau province. These interpretations emerge from different local people who can be grouped into citizens, tourism businesspeople and the local authority. The members of each group share certain characteristics, such as duration of working in tourism, their position in the company, and their concerns about the development of tourism industry in the region. These interpretations reflect what they feel and how they interact with tourism in the region.

6.2 Responses of local stakeholders towards current policies that support sustainable tourism in the area

To support sustainable tourism in the region, many policies based on laws (introduced in Chapter One) were created. Some are directly used to control tourism industry, while others affect the development of the industry indirectly. Those local policies are used to contribute positively to local strategies for sustainable tourism development. Local stakeholders were asked for their comments on these policies and implementation to find out how effective they are

and four key themes were identified. Several local tourism businesspeople thought that (i) these policies are not effective enough and there should be more action plans. Several local citizens, local tourism businesspeople and the local authority advised that (ii) these policies should be applied strictly. Moreover, some local citizens and local tourism businesspeople stated that (iii) new policies should be created and (iv) these policies should be publicised more widely (see Figure 6.2).

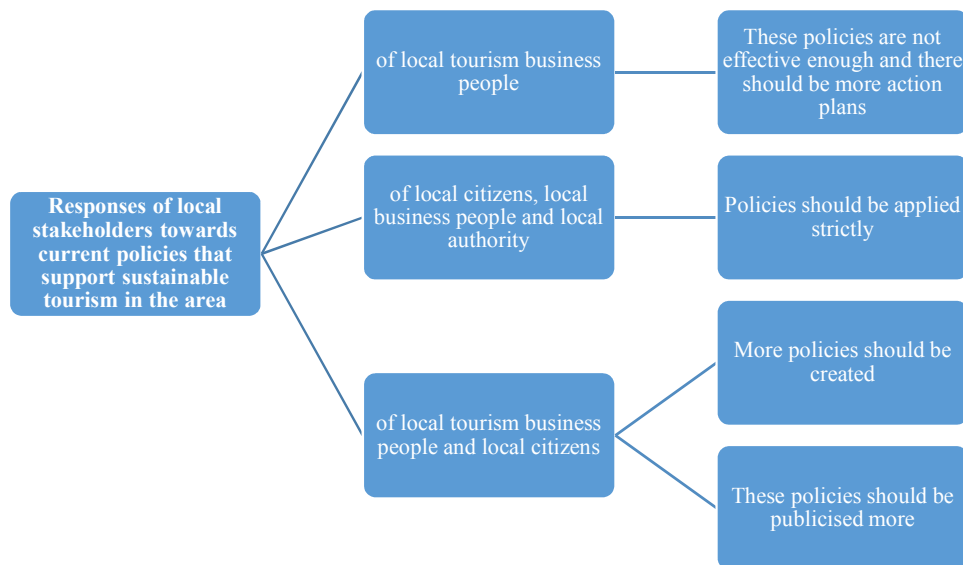


Figure 6.2: Responses of local stakeholders towards current policies that support sustainable tourism in the area, main themes

6.2.1 These policies are not effective and there should be more action plans

Local tourism businesspeople, who acknowledge the existence of the policies supporting sustainable tourism in the region and follow them during their business activities, found that these policies were not effective enough and thought these

policies can be more efficient. In detail, (i) there are gaps between policy and implementation; (ii) the policies tend to be tied too much to laws, which make them difficult to apply in the region; (iii) there should be more cooperation between tourism and other industries in the region; and (iv) there should be a link between the policies and education.

Several local tourism businesspeople commented that there were gaps between the policies and implementation. Not all policies were implemented thoroughly; for example, some policies were implemented only until problems decreased. Sometimes, policies are too general, which makes implementation difficult. This was illustrated by one manager:

I think they should have clearer plans and implementation programs for those policies. Those plans should be delivered to everyone in the region. Besides, there are still spaces between the policies and the implementations. They need to implement the policies more continuously and seriously as some problems like scams and reliable lists of accommodation and restaurants have not been really been effectively solved. Once these policies are not constantly applied, scams can emerge any time.

Moreover, to support the implementation of the policies, local tourism businesspeople emphasised the role of families, which are important in Vietnamese society. As stated by the manager of tourist company 4:

We should have strategies that can help each family acknowledge the importance of sustainable tourism in the area. The elders will advise the younger people to behave suitably in accordance with the policies. By showing the younger generations how their bad behaviours may affect future generations and themselves, the elders will make local populations more conscious about the current issues of the area and their negative effects and encourage them to engage in the implementations of the policies such as protecting the natural environment, behaving themselves toward tourists and avoiding social evils in the region.

In the above comment, culture was mentioned as a tool to drive and enable sustainable development as discussed by UNESCO (2012). Besides being used to attract tourists, culture can also influence lifestyles and individual behaviours. In Vietnamese culture, people are family-oriented. Children are taught filial piety and younger people obey or follow what their elders advise. As a result, elders can influence younger people to change their behaviour to support sustainable tourism in the region, once informed about the policies. Family education is a strong method through which to implement policies in Vietnamese society.

Local tourism businesspeople claimed that the policies tend to be tied too much to national laws, which makes them difficult to apply in the region. They proposed that the local state should use a participatory approach, i.e., they should talk to local businesses, rather than top-down policy-making. This will help to specify

the policies and make them easier to carry out, as they will fit more into the status of the tourism industry in the region and not constrain local businesses with unsuitable terms. This is illustrated by a manager below:

I think the Central Government should allow the province to act accordingly to the situations of the area as the laws and policies cannot be applied the same for everywhere. I think we should concentrate on the current policies and try to follow them well rather than having more policies. For example, I think that the fine for littering is too low. We should apply a much higher fine to deal with this problem in the region to keep the region tidy.

Tourism cannot stand alone and relies on many other industries to exist and develop; local tourism business people suggested that policies should create more connections between tourism industry and others in the region. This would make the policies easier to implement with the support of other industries and the role of tourism in the region would be more widely recognised. One manager of a tourist company mentioned this as below:

Other sectors in the region should consider tourism as a major sector in the region and all should support the industry to develop well. As it has been emphasised by the leaders of the province, the policies should focus on making this become true. To achieve this, the policies should try to create more connections between related industries such as environmental

management, banking, trading, and so on and the tourism industry and seek for the support of all these industries in the implementation procedures.

It was felt that there should be a link between policy and education. Local tourism businesspeople thought that there issues of sustainable tourism should be raised in schools to give students clearer ideas about environmental protection, good behaviour with tourists and actively help the region to eliminate social evils. It is also considered that tourism can be strengthened by educating locals. One manager of a tourist company mentioned this:

We should also focus on educating young generations about environmental as well as socio-cultural issues so that they can behave well in the future. As they are the future human resource as well as valuable local stakeholders, they should be invested in for sustainable development as well as sustainable tourism. As a result, policies should link those issues of tourism in the region to education knowledge in the region.

6.2.2 Policies should be applied strictly

Considering the policies supporting sustainable tourism in the region, all three stakeholder groups commented that they should be applied more strictly. The penalties in Vietnam tend to be weak, so that illegal acts are repeated after fines. Also, while there are also some incentives to implement policies such as making businesses more popular to tourists through information on local websites or free

training courses, there are still some illegal acts. This can be divided into three subthemes: (i) applying higher fines or withdrawing business licenses; (ii) strict management of the implementation stages of the policies; (iii) publishing blacklists of law breakers.

When considering policies using for tourism development in the region, several local citizens showed their disapproval of several local tourism businesses. They felt that scams and environment pollution from tourism businesses were ruining the image of the tourism industry and the region. They proposed that higher fines should be applied to those cases or these businesses should be banned from continuing their business. One local citizen reflected:

I really don't know why these illegal acts keep happening in our region where tourism is like a main source of income for many people. They tend to cheat tourists whenever they can. The overcharged bills are unreasonably too much. Sometimes it costs ten times more expensive than the amount that tourists should pay. Some restaurants and hotels are also polluting the environment and this also ruins the tourism industry of the region. These businesses should be heavily fined and some of them should not be allowed to continue the business in the region anymore.

Although applying higher fines or withdrawing business licenses might not be the best solution to these problems, they thought that this should be done as soon as possible to reduce the number of illegal actions in the region. It may motivate

local tourism businesses to consider what they are doing and improve the image of tourism in the region.

Local tourism businesspeople thought that the implementation stages of the policies should be strictly managed. Local authorities should ensure that all relevant policies are applied to all local business and they all should know what they should or should not do. Regular checks are also necessary to make sure all local tourism businesses follow the policies strictly. Breaches of the law should be resolved completely so that it will not happen again. A manager of a travel company mentioned this as below:

As the problems of scams and social evils can happen and return in the region, the local authority should look closely at each problem and make sure that the implementation stages are strictly managed. They have to keep checking the local businesses to make sure that they follow the fixed prices that are listed. Similarly, social evils tend to decrease when they are more regularly controlled.

Through regular checks, the local authority can remind local businesses about the listed and fixed prices. Although it may require resources, such as human resources, time and effort, to carry out these checks, enhancing and ensuring tourism services is vital to the tourism industry. Satisfaction may not only encourage tourists to return, but also makes them more likely to recommend the region as a tourism destination for their relatives and friends.

Several local citizens and local authorities claimed that those who break the law should be made known to tourists and other locals, to prevent them continuing to cheat tourists. As one local authority manager noted:

After each case that was blamed to be overpricing or cheating, we add it to a blacklist and inform local citizens as well as tourists through the website of the Tourism Department and newspapers. We want to make sure that everyone is noticed about those addresses so that these businesses cannot continue their illegal acts anymore. We also provide the programme "Trusted addresses" to introduce the reliable local tourism businesses for tourists.

Local citizens felt that making everyone aware of illegal behaviour was more effective than the penalties for the illegal acts. Tourists visiting the region are now very sensitive to the scams as they happen many times and are reported by newspaper as well as word of mouth. As a result, tourists will stay away from these local tourism businesses and tend to follow the "Trusted addresses" provided by the region, as introduced in Chapter One. The reported businesses have to change if they want to continue their business as tourists are aware of them as blacklisted and do not want to be cheated again.

6.2.3 More policies should be created

Although there are a number of policies in the region supporting the development of sustainable tourism (as introduced in Chapter One), several local citizens and local tourism businesspeople still found it necessary to have more. They found that there were still several issues that needed to be resolved, perhaps because these policies were not popular enough. As local citizen number 19 stated:

There should be capital support policies for companies with suitable business projects so that tourism industry can develop sustainably. In addition, we need policies to support jobs in tourism as it tends to be seasonal jobs in the area. We should also have policy to invest more on environment protection such as planting more trees, securing green areas and clearing the beaches every time. Besides, stricter penalties should be created for those that pollute the environment and inflating prices unreasonably.

According to the above quotation, there is a need for incentives from government or the public sector to stimulate local businesses to pursue sustainable practices. Local government can offer special loans or grants to support local businesses in implementing sustainable practices. Those who are following the policies well can be given priority to approach new sources of tourists through profiles of visitor markets or selected to attend tourism trade fairs in or outside the region for networking opportunities. These incentives not only stimulate local businesses to

improve, but also create behaviour change among them. Along with laws, incentive policies can support sustainable practices in the region.

6.2.4 These policies should be publicised more

Although the policies introduced in Chapter One are visible and known by many local tourism business people in the region, several local citizens are still unfamiliar with them. This issue is not only recognised by local citizens but also local tourism businesspeople. Some interviewees who are local citizens were unaware of the policies, while managers of local tourism companies also thought that there were many people unaware of these policies. They thought these policies should be publicised more widely to tourism companies in the region and also to local citizens. As one manager of a tourist company in the region stated:

I think that there are still many local people do not know about these policies. Although most of the local businesses are aware of them, they seem to be strange to local citizens. These policies should be introduced to all local people through newspapers, notice boards or on the local news website so that all of us know about them and can follow or even contribute to the effectiveness of them. In general, the local authority should introduce those policies widely among the community.

In the above manager's view, the key issue is about the dissemination of policies by local government. Policies were not targeted at local citizens; thus the information was not reaching this stakeholder group. Local government should

ensure that most of the local stakeholders, businesspeople and local citizens are aware of these policies so that they can be better implemented and illegal acts can be avoided.

Also, it was noted that when there was a tourism event such as forum or conference in the region, many of the local tourism companies as well as local citizens who were living near the venue of organisation did not know about the event. Some found that the information regarding the events was not interesting enough to catch people's attention. As a result, most of the policies are unfamiliar to local populations. To solve this problem, local authority should ensure the popularity of the policies as well as working co-operatively with local tourism businesses to inform local stakeholders.

6.3 Conclusion

From the data analysis, the interpretations of sustainable tourism by the local stakeholders are various and six key interpretations have been identified. They are: (i) tourism with environmental and natural resource protection and conservation; (ii) tourism that optimises the usage of available resources of the region; (iii) tourism with careful land-use planning; (iv) tourism with shared economic benefits for local stakeholders; (v) tourism that focusses both natural environment and socio-cultural aspects; and (vi) tourism that can receive more tourists and increase the investment return rate. While 'tourism with environment and natural resource protection for future generations' was mentioned most often by local stakeholders within the six key themes, 'tourism that can receive more

tourists and increase the investment return rate' was mentioned least often. These interpretations reflect not only the ways that sustainable tourism in the region is being practised, but also the current issues that need to be addressed.

Regarding the responses of local stakeholders towards current policies that support sustainable tourism in the area, four main themes were identified: (i) these policies are not effective enough and there should be more action plans; (ii) these policies should be applied more strictly; (iii) some more policies should be created; and (iv) these policies should be publicised more. Local stakeholders showed their opinions of current policies and (local citizens in particular) proposed policies to enhance the development of tourism industry in the region. They all acknowledge that tourism is a key economic sector in the region and the efficiency of these policies is crucial to the sustainable development of the industry. Local stakeholders, including local citizens, local tourism businesspeople and local authority have to cooperate to make sure that policies are suitable, usable and applicable. Although there are still many issues regarding current policies, from contents to implementation, local stakeholders show their interest and will to support and enhance them.

Chapter Seven:

Awareness of the Effects of Sustainable Tourism Development and the Barriers to Realising Opportunities

7.0 Introduction

The aims of this chapter are to analyse the awareness and comprehension of the effects of sustainable tourism development, and the barriers encountered by local stakeholders to their participation in sustainable tourism development in Baria-Vungtau Province, Vietnam. Through analysis of the data, key themes relating to these issues have been generated, as shown in Figures 7.1 and 7.2. Local stakeholders acknowledged both positive and negative effects of tourism in the region. Nevertheless, as the positive effects outweigh the negative, they generally support the development of sustainable tourism in the region. Regarding barriers encountered by local stakeholders to realising the opportunities from sustainable tourism development, operational, structural and cultural issues were identified.

7.1 The awareness and comprehension of effects of sustainable tourism development of local stakeholders in Baria-Vungtau Province, Vietnam

The effects of sustainable tourism development on the environment, economy, society and culture are interpreted as being both positive and negative. Six broad themes are identifiable: positive and negative environmental effects; positive and negative economic effects; and positive and negative socio-cultural effects, as shown in Figure 7.1, which are explained in detail in the following sub-sections

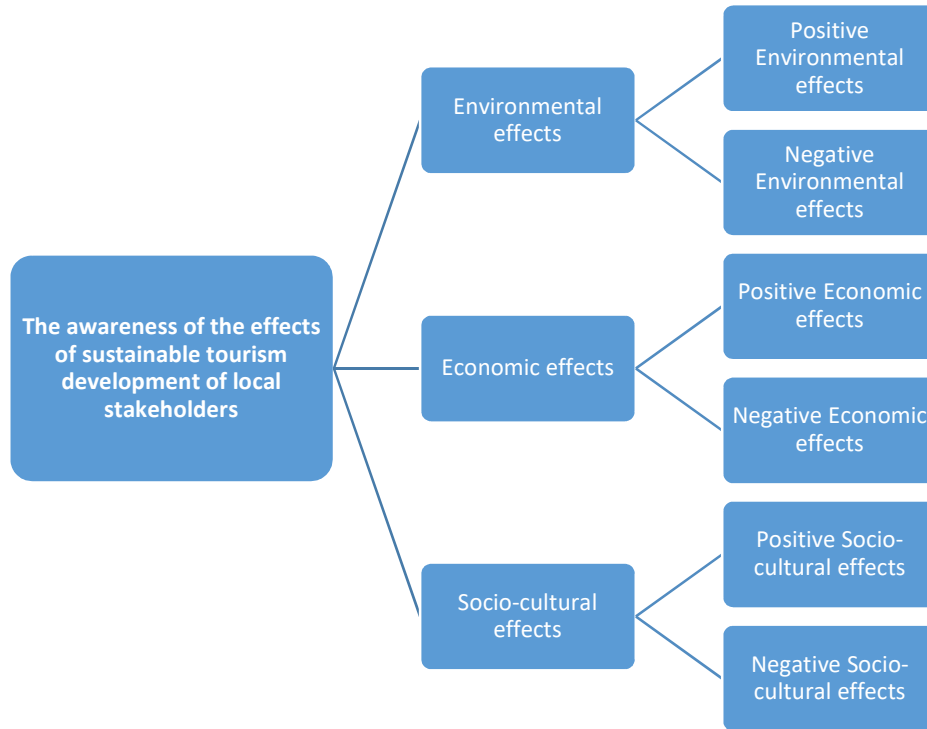


Figure 7.1: The awareness of effects of sustainable tourism development of the local stakeholders in Baria-Vungtau Province, Vietnam, main themes.

7.1.1 Environmental effects of sustainable tourism in BRVT Province

Of the key themes of effects of sustainable tourism identified by stakeholders, environmental effects are the most frequently mentioned. Whilst accepting that sustainable tourism may support the protection of the natural environment and conservation of natural resources in the region, they were concerned that there were negative effects of tourism, which required careful management from the

local authority and local businesses. Both the positive and negative environmental effects of sustainable tourism development are detailed below.

7.1.1.1 Positive environmental effects

Local stakeholders recognised that in comparison to conventional approaches to tourism development, sustainable tourism tended to be more positive toward environmental protection. Although economic benefits remained the key goals, the natural environment was considered to have a higher priority according to sustainable tourism than conventional approaches. These environmental benefits were often constructed from observations. For example, a common expression from stakeholders was that sustainable tourism protects the environment by making sure that litter is cleared from beaches and tourist sites. Nonetheless, although the beaches are now much tidier in comparison to before the implementation of sustainable tourism policies, tourists still often litter these areas. However, a notable change has been a decline in the littering of the beaches by local people. Many locals believe that more staff should be hired by the local authority to collect litter, and that tourists should be encouraged by the local authority and private sector to be more conscious of environmental protection. As one local citizen stated:

I believe that sustainable tourism helps protect the environment in the region. As sustainable tourism deals with protecting the environment, I think the litter problem caused by tourists at beaches and tourist sites will be solved. At this moment, litter problems caused by local people have

been solved well. There is no trash on those sites when tourists are not there. Without keeping those areas clean and tidy, we will soon face big problems with litter in the area, as tourists keep littering these sites and do not clean them when they leave. To reach sustainable development in the region, at least this problem must be solved.

Littering, one of the most severe problems that tourism brings to the region, is one of the most common issues mentioned when local stakeholders were asked about the effects of sustainable tourism in the region. Garbage is often left at beaches and tourist sites over weekends and holidays, when these sites are full of tourists, and the problem receives extensive media coverage through newspapers such as Tuoi Tre, Thanh Nien, and Vnexpress.

A common theme amongst stakeholders is that solid and liquid waste products from local businesses, especially those in the tourism industry, should be processed before being released into the environment. Local tourism businesspeople felt that this issue had largely been ignored by the local private sector and that these types of waste were not being disposed of as required by law. They felt that the local authorities did not work efficiently enough to solve this problem, expecting sustainable tourism policies to be implemented more strictly, which, in their view, would help to solve this problem. Without a solution to this issue they believe that sustainable tourism cannot be achieved, as illustrated by a manager of a tourist company below:

Beside the litter from tourists at the beaches and tourist sites, solid and liquid waste from local businesses, especially those in the tourism industry, are being critically considered in the implementation of sustainable tourism. As these kinds of waste are produced daily and can severely affect the natural environment in the region, sustainable tourism cannot be successful if they are not treated well. This is a current issue of our province, so sustainable tourism policies should be better implemented so that the natural environment can be improved and better protected.

The potential positive effect of improving the quality of the surrounding environment through sustainable tourism development was referred to most often by local people working in the tourism industry out of all the stakeholder groups. As they work in the industry, they are likely to be aware of the environmental problems that can be generated by tourism, and expect them to be solved by the implementation of appropriate policies by the local authorities. Some local stakeholders and many tourists do not care about the natural environment at beaches and tourist sites, and this trend is repeated throughout the country. As a result, local authorities in each province struggle to solve problems with waste at tourist sites, especially beaches, which can be covered by waste during weekends or long holidays. Local stakeholders noted that the local authorities had begun to focus on this problem for a more sustainable development of tourism in the region, with cleaning campaigns on beaches, but they thought that more should be done, such as applying stricter policies and strategies.

Local people recognised that sustainable tourism may help protect and increase the bio-mass of green areas through the planting of trees and flowers in the region, whilst also increasing the aesthetic appeal and environmental quality of the area for tourists and local people. As local citizen 9 commented:

I think green areas are very important for the natural environment. It makes the atmosphere more comfortable, helps keep the groundwater, refreshes the air and so on. With more green areas, the region will become cooler and the air will be fresher, which can also attract more tourists to our province. When sustainable tourism policies are implemented, more green areas are built and the natural environment will soon be improved.

These stakeholders thought that more trees should be planted and that large trees should be conserved. Trees are essential to the cooling of the environment for the comfort of both tourists and local citizens. The citizens of Baria-Vungtau recognised that the construction of new buildings such as hotels, resorts, theme parks or restaurants is subject to environmental planning laws and regulations to minimise environmental disruption. They noted that some natural areas had been severely impacted by the construction of buildings or roads to serve tourists, for example at Binh Chau natural hot springs and other scenic areas along the coast. In the context of the environmental impact at Binh Chau hot springs, local resident 12 stated:

I think that they used too much concrete in an area that should be more natural. The hot spring is located next to the forest and is considered as part of the forest. We can develop it to be a tourist site, but it should be more carefully designed and they should not disturb the natural environment too much. It not only makes the site less attractive but also causes negative effects to the natural environment. If many tourist sites are constructed like this, we may soon destroy the natural environment and sustainable tourism cannot be achieved.

Local stakeholders recognised that tourism development has often meant destroying large areas of nature for resort and hotel construction. However, there was general agreement that the implementation of sustainable tourism should help to solve this problem, as it is more likely to give legislative and legal protection to natural areas. They also envisaged that sustainable construction techniques would be more environmentally sound than those previously used. They noted that although the region is making tourism more sustainable, natural areas cannot be preserved completely, as tourism is not the only economic sector in the region. Other provincial economic activities include: petroleum exploitation, electricity generation at the Phú Mỹ Power Plants and Bà Rịa Thermal Power Plant, manufacturing petrochemicals at the Phú Mỹ Urea Plant, polyethylene, steel production, and cement production. These industries may also destroy some natural areas as well as pollute the air, ground and water during their operation. Nevertheless, with more natural areas protected and used efficiently to approach

sustainable tourism, natural environment in the region is better conserved and bring benefit to local populations.

Local people thought that sustainable tourism policies would protect the natural environment through encouraging the use of suitable products. For example, items such as waste bins, bags and decorative items, which are predominantly fabricated from plastic, could be made of natural materials instead, making them more easily recyclable. Natural materials suitable for the production of these items include rattan, bamboo, water hyacinth or sea grass. The use of natural materials may also help develop local craft villages, which can serve tourists and allow locals to earn money. Recycling materials and waste has been little employed to date in the region or country as a whole. More bins should be provided to classify types of waste to support recycling. Concerning the use of natural materials in place of plastic, one manager of a tourist company commented:

With sustainable tourism, I think that some products such as waste bins, bags, decoration items in resorts, hotel or restaurants, made of natural materials such as rattan, bamboo, water hyacinth or sea grass will soon be encouraged to be used to serve tourists in the region. These products not only help protect the natural environment but also make local people in the area become more concerned about the natural environment. Local people as well as tourists will be more aware of the harm of plastic on the natural environment and they all will also help protect the natural environment.

Several local stakeholders were aware that on Cham Island, Hoi An City in Quang Nam Province, a famous tourism destination in central Vietnam, the use of natural material products is actively encouraged as part of a strategy to make tourism more sustainable. The use of plastic bags is forbidden here; bags are made of paper or other natural materials. The stakeholders in the research area believe that pursuing such policies to reduce non-recyclable waste could play an active part in sustainable development in the region.

7.1.1.2 Negative environmental effects

Counteracting the observed positive effects of sustainable tourism, local stakeholders also noted a range of negative effects on the natural environment of the region. This may be the result of sustainable tourism policies that have not been implemented thoroughly or strictly enough. The process must be consistently implemented and controlled. Local stakeholders mentioned three key themes of negative environmental effects of sustainable tourism.

Commonly-cited impacts included noise pollution and air pollution, particularly the beach areas, and particularly at weekends or during special events. Most of the roads leading to tourist sites face these problem during these periods and the beaches are very noisy. Local stakeholders thought that these problems could not be completely resolved through the implementation of sustainable tourism and would remain significant challenges as long as the tourism industry exists in the region. As one representative of the local authority stated:

Although the region tries its best to protect the natural environment to approach sustainable tourism, these issues cannot be got rid of. Noise pollution and air pollution are part of the results of tourists coming to the area and we have not been able to reduce them. These effects just happen at weekends, holidays or during special events such as traditional and international festivals in the area. We have to overcome this for the development of tourism in the region until there is new strategy that can make the industry less seasonal.

Although noise pollution and air pollution are serious problems that negatively affect the natural environment, they cannot be avoided. However, they can certainly be substantially lessened through environmental legislation, planning and management. These are problems of conventional tourism, but as sustainable tourism in the region is still in its infancy, they remain in the absence of efficient implementation of the relevant strategies. These problems occur mostly on beaches, and the region's historical and cultural tourist sites, which are less popular, are largely undisturbed.

Next, although most of the tourism businesses in the region try to protect the natural environment by offering facilities such as waste bins to keep the area clean, and urging tourists to keep their sites free from trash etc., local stakeholders noted problems of littering and pollution from waste water generated by the tourists. This is another issue that local people felt could not be solved easily in a

country in which environmental awareness is still low. A manager of a tourist company in Vungtau City noted:

Although we have tried hard to tell tourists about avoiding littering in the area and provided many bins for them to use during their visits, the area is full of litter after they have left. Of course, our staff will collect all the trash right after that, but it is really a problem to the tourist sites. When the sites are full of litter like that, the new coming tourists will have a bad image of the sites and think that we do not keep the area clean.

Local stakeholders thought that this happened because tourists tended to bring food with them, rather than ordering it on site, as the staff of local restaurants are responsible for the cleanliness of the areas they serve. After finishing food, tourists are lazy about placing rubbish into the bins. The food leftovers and nylon bags and other containers are usually left at tourist sites, especially the beaches, subsequently being swept into the ocean with tidal movements, due to the low awareness of natural environment of many tourists. There should be stricter penalties as well as more staff at the sites to change the behaviour of these tourists as well as collecting the waste to clean the areas.

Local stakeholders also recognised that, although sustainable tourism aims to protect the natural environment, it still requires the use of natural resources to serve tourists. The use of land, water, seafood, etc. can lead to natural resource depletion and environmental degradation, including poor water quality and soil

erosion. Natural areas and bio-diversity are also lost as a consequence of the building of resorts and transport infrastructure. There are many tourism development projects in the region, as it is aiming to become one of the biggest tourism hubs of Vietnam, and thus there is an inevitable trade-off between the use of natural resources and tourism development. This pressure is exemplified by a representative of the local authority in the following statement:

One of the main aims of sustainable tourism is to protect the natural environment. However, our region is targeting to be one of the biggest tourism centres of Vietnam. There are many big projects in the region and we need more land for them. We are doing our best to reinvestigate these projects to make sure that they are following the rules of protecting the natural environment and scanning to find out if any of them cannot be implemented to save the lands and give the priorities to others with more suitable projects which are friendlier to the natural environment.

The conservation of natural resources is subsequently highly dependent on the careful environmental screening of planning applications and the implementation of environmental management policies. Local authorities can require development projects to conserve land and maximise the environmental sustainability of buildings. They also have the power to stop the construction of developments that have too many negative environmental consequences.

7.1.2 Economic effects of sustainable tourism in Baria-Vungtau Province

Central to sustainable tourism is that economic development should focus on the creation of livelihood opportunities and associated well-being for locals.

Economic opportunities are the key reason for the existence of the industry in Baria-Vung, a rationale shared by most global tourism destinations. However, the stakeholders identified both positive and negative economic effects of sustainable tourism, as explained in the following sub-sections.

7.1.2.1 Positive economic effects

As tourism has existed for a long time in the region, local stakeholders agreed that it had brought many positive economic effects to the local community, and more so since the development of sustainable tourism. More stable jobs have been created by the sustainable tourism approach than under conventional tourism. More human resources are needed to maintain green areas, protect tourists at tourist sites, to manage tourism businesses, etc. A local citizen expressed his view:

It is clear that tourism creates lots of jobs for local people as well as other people coming from other areas of the country or even some expats working in the province. As I know, there are much more hotels, resorts, restaurants, tourism services nowadays compare to those ten years ago. As a result, of course more human resources are required to work in these businesses. With sustainable tourism, I think that these jobs can be more

stable as we tend to have more tourists with new strategies of the local authority.

Local stakeholders believe that the development of sustainable tourism could create more jobs in tourism and other businesses, such as banking, retail, and so forth. They were eager to talk about this, imagining that their children would not have to seek jobs far from home as in former generations. They hoped that human resource from local people would have priority for employment in tourism industry. This income also generates extra tax revenue, via restaurant and hotel taxes among others, which can be used for schools, housing, hospitals and other infrastructure.

Local stakeholders were aware that there was more investment in the region due to sustainable tourism policies of local authorities. Beside investment such as that undertaken in conventional tourism to serve the rising demands of tourists in the region, there has been more investment in construction and technology such as solid and liquid waste processing systems, public sanitary systems, experts to manage sustainable tourism in the region and new types of tourism such ecotourism and community-based tourism. As one manager of a tourist company in the region stated:

One of the clear benefits of sustainable tourism development for the economy of the region is the investments of not only national but also international organisations. The local authority also has made some

investments to support environmental protection to ensure sustainable tourism. As sustainable tourism is new to the region, we are receiving many investments to enhance the industry and make progress to reach a new level of development. Some companies are investing in waste processing systems in the region. Others are establishing new businesses that focus on ecotourism and community-based tourism.

Mostly mentioned by local tourist companies, the government's policies for sustainable tourism encourages investment in and development of local businesses, especially small hotels and restaurants. As stated by a manager of tourist company, these local businesses tend to be passive, receiving tourists constantly, and do not need to take part in marketing activities to attract more tourists. As they have regular clients, they think that tourists will continue to come to their businesses as usual and it is not necessary to attract new clients.

Nevertheless, with more investment of local people and the outsiders in new hotels, resorts and restaurants in the region, especially those with environmental protection, existing local businesses may have to rethink this approach, attend to their infrastructure and develop their businesses. The following response of a manager from a tourist company illustrated this:

As the region has benefited from tourism for a long time, small local businesses in this industry tend to have regular clients, mostly from Ho Chi Minh City, Dong Nai Province and Binh Duong Province. As a result, they are lazy in any marketing activities or even in renovating their

infrastructure. As there are more investments in tourism industry in the region, these local businesses will soon have to reconsider the ways they are doing business and this issue can be solved.

This investment will not only make the industry more developed but also make the areas in which they run business cleaner and more attractive to tourists. These small hotels and hostels are now considered old and clumsy. As a result, they make the areas look unattractive. With the effects of new accommodation infrastructure and sustainable tourism approach, these small local hotels will improve themselves to develop their businesses.

Local people also recognised that sustainable tourism could bring more economic benefits to local community than conventional tourism. While conventional tourism focuses on making profit for tourism businesses and tends to ignore the local community, sustainable tourism tends to use more local products, local services and share the profits with the local community. This feature of sustainable tourism is meaningful to the economy of the region, where many citizens work in agriculture, fishery and service industries as referred to by a manager of a tourist company:

It is very important that sustainable tourism can encourage the use of local product and local services rather than the imported one. This support can enhance the living standards of the local community and reduce the money leakage caused by conventional tourism. The benefits from tourism thus

are shared more to the local community and make them more eager to develop the industry in the region. This will make them do their best to serve tourists and satisfy them to encourage their return and recommendation.

This positive economic effect is a unique characteristic of sustainable tourism, which aims at enhancing the local community, rather than just making profit for tourism businesses. Local stakeholders thought that sustainable tourism would encourage the development of other local businesses thus bringing progress economic improvements to the region.

7.1.2.2 Negative economic effects

While appreciating the positive economic effects of sustainable tourism, local stakeholders also considered its negative economic effects. They identified three negative effects similar to those of conventional tourism, which still have not been resolved in the early stages of sustainable tourism in the region: weekly fluctuations in demand; leakage of money; and the dependency of tourism.

Most of the tourists coming to the region tend to travel at weekends, public holidays or when there are special events, such as traditional festivals. Weekly fluctuations in demand affects not only supply-side behaviour and finance but also labour and stakeholder operations. Most of the services, labour and infrastructure of tourism just operate during weekends or public holidays. The region experiences this issue because it is not attractive enough to attract tourists

during weekdays due to market diversification. Current tourists to the region are the ones from surrounding areas, thus they usually take their weekends and public holidays to travel to the province. This issue leads to low returns on capital investment and the loss of profits, due to underutilisation and the inefficient use of resources and facilities as illustrated by one manager employed in a four-star hotel:

We do not have much occupancy during weekdays. Tourists tend to visit the region at weekends and holidays only as they are from the surrounding areas. This brings us many difficulties in managing the business in terms of capital and human resources. As a result, we experience low returns on capital investments and cannot pay the staff properly.

The region also faces a lack of demand for jobs during weekdays, and staff skills remain minimal. There is also some increase of training costs for labour recruited on a seasonal basis. It is more difficult to keep the staff working with low salary. As a result, the ones with some experience tend to leave and new staffs have to be recruited and trained for the businesses. This was mentioned mostly by local people working in resorts and hotels in the region, while travel companies tend to experience less negativity.

Money generated by tourism does not always benefit the local community, as it may leak out to international companies, such as hotel chains. This is akin to what Britton (1982) found in his study in Fiji. In the region, there are several foreign-

owned hotels and resorts, and the profits from those businesses are repatriated to their foreign owners. Nonetheless, as there are not many international tourists coming to the area there are not many properties owned by foreigners as a manager of a tourist company alluded to:

Although sustainable tourism aims to support the living standards of the local community, there is still money leakage due to foreign investments. We just benefit from these investments in term of employment, tax revenue. But most of the profits belong to the investors, [and are] not equally shared to the local community.

As the aims of sustainable tourism is to maximise the use the products and services of local community, the problem of leakage is minimised. For instance, local agricultural products and the employment of local people are prioritised. As a result, the local community can benefit more from tourism activities by providing products and human resource for the industry.

As tourism industry interrelated with other industries and relies heavily on natural resources, it is vulnerable to terrorist incidents, natural disasters and economic shocks. For instance, the region experienced a storm in 2006, in which many hotels, resorts, restaurants and tourist sites were damaged. As a result, these businesses could not accommodate tourists and had to invest heavily in renovation. Later, in 2008, when the world experienced the great economic

recession, the number of tourists coming to the region dropped dramatically. The local authority mentioned this as below:

As sustainable tourism is still tourism, it is still affected by many other industries as well as events such as natural disasters and economic recession. As it is so vulnerable, it can negatively affect the economy of the region. We have experienced two serious periods of negative effects in 2006 when a storm hit the region and in 2008 when the world was hit by a great recession. This is the problem that sustainable tourism cannot overcome till now.

To minimise this problem, sustainable tourism can support the natural environment to slow down the negative effects of pollution. It can also support other industries in the region to develop, such as agriculture, fishing and other service industries. This will strengthen the economy and allow the tourism industry to overcome the negative effects of such factors.

7.1.3 Socio-cultural effects of sustainable tourism in Baria-Vungtau Province

Beside environmental and economic impacts, local stakeholders also pointed out both positive and negative socio-cultural effects of sustainable tourism. These effects were less prominent for local stakeholders and only mentioned by some senior local citizens and people working in tourism industry. Again, there are positive effects than negative ones.

7.1.3.1 Positive socio-cultural effects

A range of positive socio-cultural effects arising from sustainable tourism were identified by the stakeholders including the creation of more green and leisure areas; the continuance of traditional customs, handicrafts and festivals; and the opportunities for local people to learn from tourists.

Local stakeholders stated that there were more green areas and leisure areas due to sustainable tourism policies in the region, helping to improve the environmental quality of the region by making it fresher and cooler whilst contributing to environmental conservation. Local citizens greatly appreciated this benefit and these areas are very valuable to local people as one local citizen described below:

Recently there have been more green areas in the region such as parks, theme parks and more trees have been planted along the streets and roads. You can see that we have very beautiful and green roads and we will have more shadows from these trees soon. I think that not only local people but also tourists do want more green areas in the region, which make all of us feel more relaxed and make the region more attractive.

With these green and leisure areas, local people have more space to walk or jog. They feel that their spiritual life is improved and they are less stressed. They hope that more green areas will be planted and more leisure parks will be available soon to serve both locals and tourists.

Locals felt that sustainable tourism helped preserve traditional regional customs, handicrafts and festivals, and local cultural events were better organised and presented. There are also some new festivals in the region, such as an International Food Festival, and International Kite Festival, which are now organised annually. Besides, handicraft villages have received investment to serve tourists better in the near future. A member of local authority mentioned this:

Traditional customs, handicrafts and festivals in our province also attract lots of tourists. The tourist sites where the events take place are nearly full of tourists during the events. As a result, we have to manage to preserve these valuable features of the region to attract and satisfy tourists. We also organise some more modern festivals and international events to draw the attention of international tourists to the region. To support the local community, we also concentrate on investing in the craft villages to introduce our unique features to tourists and help local citizens make money from tourism as well.

Although the regional culture has not been attractive to international tourists thus most of the tourists attending events or festivals are domestic, with the organisation of international events, it is hoped that gradually more international tourists will attend these events. Tourism industry in the region wants to receive more international tourists, who may expense more than the current domestic ones do. As they are mostly from the surrounding areas, the current domestic tourists tend to stay in the region for a short time and do not expense much.

Sustainable tourism created opportunities for local people to come into contact with tourists visiting the region. Unlike conventional tourism, sustainable tourism aims to support the local community by using local products and encouraging tourists to visit local craft villages, allowing locals to interact with tourists and allow mutual learning and cultural exchange as mentioned by a local citizen:

Local people have more opportunities to come into contact with tourists nowadays due to sustainable tourism trends. The local authority is paying more attention on investing to preserve the local traditional craft villages with traditional jobs like wine-making, rice-paper-making and introducing tourists to the villages. Local citizens in these villages thus have contact with tourists. Without the development of sustainable tourism, these villagers would hardly ever have contact with other people outside their villages.

Contact with tourists may make local people more aware of tourism and the importance of protecting the natural environment and local traditional values. With the strategies of sustainable tourism in the region, more villages will be invested to use traditional jobs such as rice wine and rice paper making to serve as tourist attractions. In addition, some community-based tourism businesses have also been established in the region to bring more tourism benefits to local populations.

7.1.3.2 Negative socio-cultural effects

According to the local stakeholders the negative socio-cultural effects from tourism are not easily avoided. Beside the positive benefits of sustainable tourism, some negative impacts remain and support from all stakeholders (local authority, businesses and citizens) is required to minimise or eliminate them. These negative effects were identified as congestion, social evils and commercialisation of traditions.

When tourism develops and attracts more tourists to the region, the local people around the tourist sites experience crowding and traffic jams especially during festivals and holidays and at weekends. Although the road network of Baria-Vungtau is in a very good condition, with large roads and streets, the huge number of tourists cause traffic jams around some tourist sites including some beaches and Co Temple. This was reflected in the interview with a local citizen a part of which is cited below:

Although we have large roads and streets as you can see, they are full of tourists when there is a festival or an event. Sometimes we also experience traffic jams even at midnight, especially when the Co Temple Festival takes place annually. At weekends, the beaches are very crowded with tourists and the local community can find this uncomfortable.

This issue was associated with conventional tourism, and sustainable tourism in the region has not solved the weekly fluctuations in demand issue. Locals rely on

the local authority to find a solution, suggesting they attempt to attract more tourists on weekdays so that there would be less coming at the weekend and manage festivals better.

As the region becomes more crowded with tourists, alongside legal services offered by tourism companies, social evils such as illegal massages and prostitution also rise to take advantage of crowds. Theft and robbery make the region more chaotic during festivals or weekends. Although the local authority has attempted to implement many solutions, these problems have not been solved. The local authority expressed their views below:

These problems cannot be easily eliminated in any tourism destinations. We are working hard to minimise these illegal businesses and social evils in the region. Although this is a problem of conventional tourism, sustainable tourism also cannot avoid them. We need the support of all local stakeholders and tourists to reduce these social issues and make the region a safer destination for tourists as well as for local people.

Although social evils cannot be avoided entirely, they can be mitigated. Local stakeholders felt there should be noticeboards and signs to make tourists and locals aware of crime, and that the local authority should have more strategies to deal with specific social evils to make the area safer and more attractive to tourists.

The commercialisation of traditional festivals is also considered a problem caused by tourism in the region. As there are many annual festivals in the region, local people tend to see them as chances to make money. Although the local authority has tried hard to change this, local citizens, especially street vendors, gather around the area of the festival and make it look more like a place for business. This can degrade these traditions, as people focus on the economic side of the events rather than the ‘authenticity’ of the traditions. As one manager of a tourist company noted,

Although sustainable tourism is trying to offer more chances for local people to earn profits from tourism in the region, there are still many local citizens trying to earn money during traditional festivals. There are many street vendors around the area of a festival. They come to try to sell soft drinks, snacks, toys, souvenirs, etc. to the attendees. They tend to consider these festivals as a chance to earn money, rather than celebrating and preserving them. Their attendance disturbs tourists and other local citizens who are participating in the events.

Tourism in Baria-Vungtau Province is trying to approach sustainability and satisfy more tourists, so these negative impacts are being tackled gradually. The local authority stated that they were working on this problem to minimise it and conserve the traditions so that not only intra-generation but also inter-generation have chance to experience them. This issue is akin to Brundtland’s (WCED, 1987)

advocacy of intra-generation and inter-generation equity in sustainable development.

7.2 Barriers to local stakeholders participating in sustainable tourism development

When asked about the barriers to taking part in sustainable tourism, local stakeholders identified the following factors: lack of information; shortage of co-ordination; lack of trained human resources; centralisation of public administration of tourism; low awareness environmental and social issues in the local community; scarcity of time; and a lack of financial resources. These barriers can be categorised into three key themes: (i) operational barriers, (ii) structural barriers and (iii) cultural barriers (see Figure 7.2).

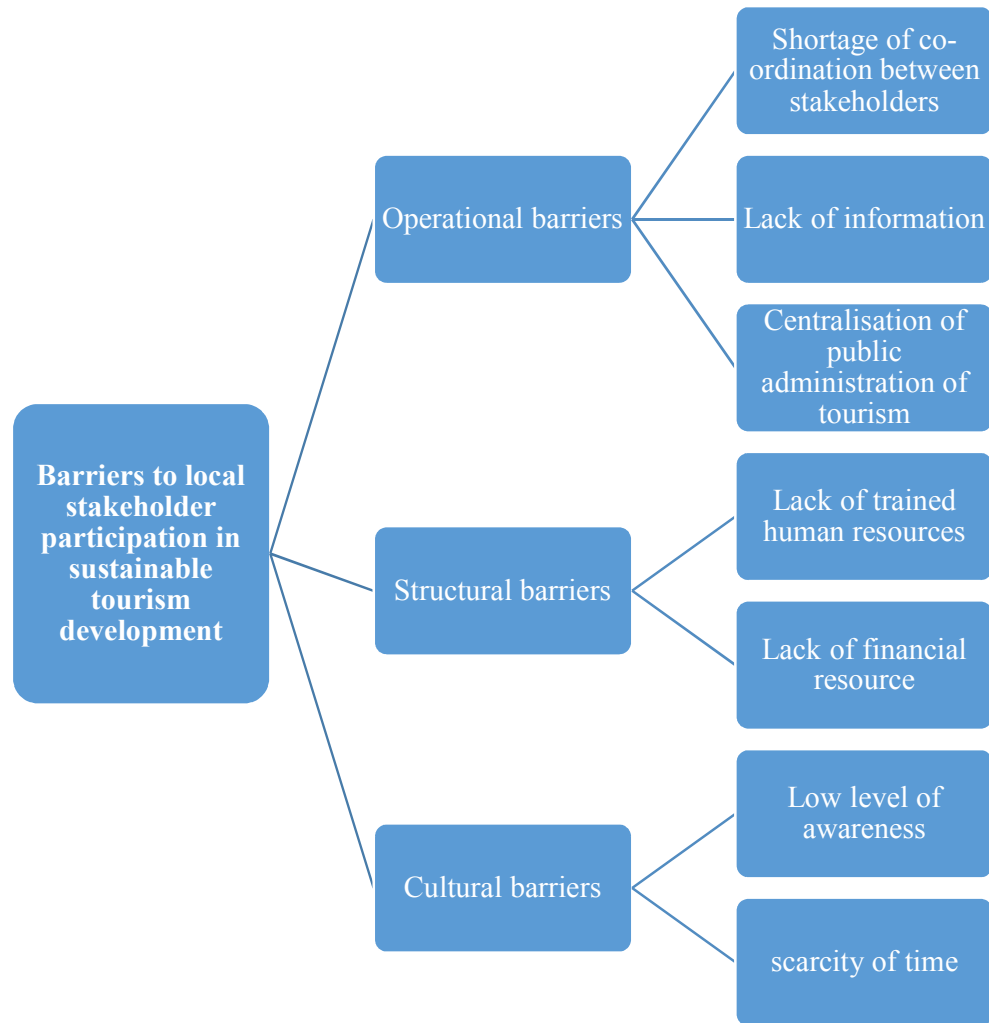


Figure 7.2: The barriers encountered by local stakeholders to their participation in sustainable tourism development

7.2.1 Operational barriers

Within operational barriers, local stakeholders felt that there were three main issues, namely: lack of information about sustainable tourism, lack of co-operation among local stakeholders and the centralisation of public administration of tourism. All three groups of local stakeholders (citizens, tourism businesses and the local authority) encounter operational barriers as being discussed below.

Both local citizens and local tourism businesses stated that they had insufficient information about the policies and strategies of the region regarding sustainable tourism development. They felt that this information could only be found internally between the departments of the province or on local authority websites, and many of them did not have time to seek this information out. This lack of information makes their ability to participate in the development of the region limited, as illustrated in an answer from an interview with a local citizen below:

I do not notice the availability of such policies or strategies on sustainable tourism development in the region. I think if they are available, they should be found on the website of local authority or they are just internal documents, like kind of secret ones. Without the information, how can I take part in any activities or support those policies or strategies? I think that local authority should make the information more open to local people through local television programs or they can use the sign boards at public places.

Owing to the lack of publicised information from the local government about initiatives in sustainable tourism there is a low level of public involvement. This barrier makes policies difficult to implement and negatively affects the development of sustainable tourism in the region as not many people know about the policies to follow and support them. Nonetheless, local stakeholders were eager to take part in sustainable tourism development if they were able.

Local tourism businesses and the local authorities face the issue of lack of co-operation among local stakeholders. The tourism industry in the region is fragmented. Many of local tourism businesses are small in size do not support each other but tend to illegally compete with each other. Moreover, within the local authorities, different Departments also tend to have different policies that may be in conflict. This was illustrated by a manager of a state-owned tourism company as cited below:

While we are trying to satisfy more tourists to the region, the local Police Department, specifically the Traffic Police, may ruin our strategies. They arrange lots of checking venues and this can make tourists feel uncomfortable. Besides, the tourism industry in the region can also be negatively affected by the road renovations, which tend to take longer time than it should be. Just imagine, do you want to visit an area with lots of dust and bad condition roads?

There exists a shortage of co-ordination among related tourism businesses. Transport companies, hotels and resorts, and travel companies in the region are not working together. Each tends to focus on their benefits only and tends to do whatever to get as many clients as possible even what they do can be unfair or illegal. When they experience low occupancy, they compete hardly with each other, sometimes even illegally, to catch the clients of the others by lowering the price or having bad words about their competitors. Without co-operation among

them, these businesses cannot develop while sustainable tourism approach in the region can also be negatively affected as a whole.

Local citizens and local tourism businesses encountered the centralisation of public administration of tourism. This issue can be faced throughout the country, as Vietnam is a Socialist republic and developing country. As a result, although there are still meetings or elections for resolving problems or asking the opinions of other local stakeholders, decision-making power is held by the local authority while local citizens and businesses are powerless. There should be decentralisation the public administration of tourism so that local populations can take part in and support sustainable tourism approach. This barrier was stated by a manager of a local tourism company as below:

In Vietnam, the local authority is the most powerful decision-maker. As they want the country to follow the Communist Party and to avoid the country from going into wrong directions, they tend to control everything strictly. As a result, planning organisation tends to be established at national level and is under the direct control of national chief political executive. This may prevent local stakeholders take part in any activities, and in this case the development of sustainable tourism in the region.

Although stakeholder participation is an important part to approach sustainable tourism, this barrier is still an issue in the region. Some local citizens thought that it was useless to take part in regional tourism development, as local authorities

would not listen to their opinions. Furthermore, local tourism businesses found that local government tends to be slow on issues that need instant actions. This is the most difficult barrier to overcome in developing areas.

7.2.2 Structural barriers

Regarding structural barriers, local tourism businesses and local authorities stated that they encountered a lack of local people with skills and knowledge to work in the tourism industry and a lack of financial resources. These barriers not only make the tourism industry not professional but also obstruct the ability to approach sustainable tourism aims. Each barrier is discussed as below.

According to most of participants from the group of local tourism businesses, people working in the tourism industry and local citizens were unfamiliar with sustainable tourism and not many of them can communicate well in foreign languages. There were only some short courses and workshops by some big hotels and resorts for their staff to introduce the concept, thus only few people could attend. As a result, not many people have skills and knowledge to approach sustainable tourism. Additionally, the training programs were not specific or professional enough. A lecturer from a tourism college asserted:

Sustainable tourism is still a new concept to Vietnam as well as Baria-Vungtau Province. In our training program for students, there is only one subject for this concept. Although there is a sustainable tourism program from the nation call 'Green Lotus' that applies for hotels and resorts which

satisfy the criteria of the brand, other knowledge or skills for this concept are still unavailable. I think the local authority and local tourism businesses should work together toward a professional training program for sustainable tourism development in the region.

Without proper training for language skills, serving skills, and knowledge about sustainable tourism, local staffs cannot take part in sustainable tourism development appropriately. This may cause an influx of potential employees from other provinces of Vietnam, or expats, causing leakage issues as above.

As sustainable tourism requires facilities and well-trained employees, local stakeholders face the lack of financial resources. This is a barrier for the local authority and tourism businesses, who are small in size and do not earn enough profits from domestic tourists due to the weekly fluctuations in demand. One manager of a small hotel stated:

We need funds to invest in new facilities as well as trained human resources that are suitable for sustainable tourism development in the region. As our business is too seasonal, the profit is not good enough for long-term investment. We know that without new investment, it will be very difficult for us to take part in the sustainable tourism development of the region.

As small businesses cannot finance these investments, micro-loans or outside investments could be considered. On the other hand, this kind of investment may lead to the leakage of benefits if there are too many foreign investors in the province. Tosun (2000, p.624) also warns about the threat of losing ‘control which emerges from outside investments’ and ‘is not easy to overcome’.

7.2.3 Cultural barriers

Regarding cultural barriers, local citizens found that they had busy daily routines and lacked the time to participate in tourism development, and the local authority and tourism businesses noted low levels of awareness of environmental and social issues in the local community. Some local citizens told me that, although they would like to take part in tourism activities, they were too busy with their jobs and housework. Some of them just participated once or twice. One local citizen expressed this as below:

I find it not easy to manage my time to attend tourism activities such as meetings, training sessions or event festivals because I am too busy with my own business. I have to get up early to open the shop and check the goods to maintain good stock for the shop every day. When I get home, it is already late in the evening...I have to do my housework as well. I wish I could arrange time for tourism activities.

Local citizens also expressed concern about the negative impact of participation in the tourism-related activities on their primary jobs. In addition, as they did not

know much about tourism, they tended to be reluctant to take part in (and take responsibility for) planning and development of sustainable tourism in the region. Rather, they preferred to keep their areas tidy and clean and help protect natural environment around their own homes. In addition, they also well behave to tourists coming to their business and provide good products or services to them.

Furthermore, local tourism businesses and the local authority complained about the low level of awareness of environmental and social issues of citizens in the region. Local citizens tend to participate only when they are reminded to do so. Although the laws on environmental protection and social crime prevention are clear, there are still many local people littering, and theft, prostitution and other evils remain. The local authority complained:

We are trying very hard to keep our region clean and protect the natural environment. However, there are still many local people that do not keep their surrounding areas clean. They tend to litter wherever they feel convenient. Besides, some local fishing villages also do not pay much attention to protect the natural environment. The waste from seafood can cause serious pollution to natural environment with their odour. For social evils, although we keep enforcing, most of them seems to be caused by people from other regions. Local citizens have to be alert more to inform us of any suspect cases so that the region can be safer.

While the region cannot easily resolve the low level of awareness of tourists coming to the region, the awareness of local people is very important to keep the region clean, tidy, attractive and safe destination for both tourists and locals. The local authority has many strategies to improve the awareness of local people, as well as sending out more staff to keep the area clean and safe. Nonetheless, the cooperation of all stakeholders is crucial to the successful implementation of such strategies.

7.3 Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the awareness and comprehension of the effects of sustainable tourism development, and the barriers encountered by local stakeholders to their participation in tourism development in Baria-Vungtau Province, Vietnam. From the data analysis, these effects have been both positive and negative, and thus six key themes are classified: positive and negative environmental effects; positive and negative economic effects; and positive and negative socio-cultural effects. The positive effects are those that sustainable tourism aims to achieve, and which differentiate it from conventional tourism. The negative aspects can be minimised when sustainable tourism is implemented consistently and thoroughly. It was claimed the sustainable tourism in the region is still in its infancy and the implementation of relevant policies is slow and needs more support from local stakeholders. In April 2016, the local authority of Vungtau City took action to remedy the pollution of beaches and tourist sites in the region, banning street vendors from beaches and tourist sites. The leaders of the local government even went to the sites to tell tourists not to bring food to

these sites and keep them free from waste. They also collected rubbish from the beaches to make local stakeholders and tourists more conscious of environment protection. There should be many more such strategies to deal with the other negative effects, to make tourism in the region sustainable.

Three key themes emerged in terms of the barriers encountered by local stakeholders to their participation in sustainable tourism development in the region: operational, structural and cultural. Operational barriers identified by all three groups of local stakeholders included lacking information about sustainable tourism, a lack of co-operation between local stakeholders, and the centralisation of public administration of tourism. The governance style is the most difficult to overcome due to the structure of the Vietnamese government and the local authority will need to be flexible to solve this difficulty. Structural barriers include a lack of trained potential employees and a lack of financial resources for the local authority and local tourism businesses. Finally, cultural barriers include a lack of time to participate in tourism activities (as identified by local citizens), and low levels of awareness of environmental and social issues in local communities were encountered by local authorities and local tourism businesses. While local citizens can support sustainable tourism by protecting their surroundings and advising others to do the same, the local authority and local tourism businesses can raise awareness in the local community and tourists with strict policies and consistently implemented strategies.

Chapter Eight:

Discussion of Findings and Conclusion

8.0 Introduction

The aim of the research is to:

To provide critical perspectives on sustainable tourism development in Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, Vietnam.

In order to help fulfil this aim, the following objectives were determined:

- Identify the interpretations of sustainable tourism held by local stakeholders;
- Critically evaluate the response of local stakeholders to current policies that support sustainable tourism in the area;
- Evaluate recognition of stakeholders of sustainable tourism development in the area; and
- Comprehend the barriers to develop sustainable tourism in the area

This chapter discusses the key findings presented in Chapters Six and Seven in relating to the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that emerged from the literature review. The contribution to knowledge made by this research will also be analysed in this chapter along with the limitations of the study and recommendations for sustainable tourism development in Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province.

8.1 Discussion of Findings

8.1.1 The interpretations of sustainable tourism by the local stakeholders

(i) A plurality of interpretations of sustainable tourism is held by local stakeholders

The interpretations of sustainable tourism by the different stakeholders are various as a consequence of their interests and interactions with tourism in the region. For example, a local citizen who lives near a tourist site or a beach that has been polluted with trash and had no protection as a natural resource, tends to interpret sustainable tourism as primarily associated with natural resource protection and conservation, rather than the other two pillars of sustainable tourism, i.e. the economic and socio-cultural concerns.

Many local citizens associate sustainable tourism with the need for careful land-use planning to ensure that tourism is developed in an environmentally-conscious way when entering new and unspoilt areas. This includes areas where previous tourism projects have not been finished and consist of incomplete and unfurnished buildings. Local citizens living in these areas recognised that unsuccessful tourism projects set a bad precedent and there was a subsequent need for careful tourism planning. These interpretations reflect that what local citizens encounter in their daily life associated with tourism may affect how they interact with sustainable tourism development in the region in the long run.

Tourism employees of the local authority and local tourism businesspeople tend to have more knowledge of tourism stemming from direct involvement in it than local citizens, and sum up sustainable tourism as follows: ‘tourism dealing with

natural environment and socio-cultural aspects and shared economic benefits for local stakeholders'. For many in these stakeholder groups, a sustainable approach to tourism is seen as the only strategy to solve the current issues of tourism in the region. However, the view of sustainability was not homogeneous within the group. There is a divergence of views within the business group, with some emphasising nature whilst others refer to socio-cultural or economic aspects. These interpretations are diverse and reflect various points of view in the region.

The findings presented in chapter six are concurrent with several other studies related to interpretations of sustainable tourism hold by different stakeholders (e.g. Byrd *et al.*, 2008; Dabphet *et al.*, 2012; Mowforth & Munt, 2009; Quintano *et al.*, 2011; Sharpley, 2009). Certain interpretations and understandings of sustainable tourism development are similar to those in the studies mentioned in terms of the meanings identified, and the understanding of community knowledge of sustainable tourism principles. Stakeholders' interpretations also reflect traditions of sustainability identified by Saarinen (2006) i.e. resource-, activity- and community-based traditions as discussed in the next section.

The interpretations of sustainable tourism of most of the stakeholders are derived from their interactions with tourism, just as what they shared within the interviews reflects what they experience daily. Their multidimensional interpretations are similar to what appears in the literature, which tends to focus more on developed areas rather the developing parts of the world, as discussed below.

(ii) Comparing six interpretations of local stakeholders toward sustainable tourism with the three primary traditions of sustainability in tourism studies

As a framework to present the interpretations of stakeholders, emergent themes have been categorised into three primary traditions presented by Saarinen (2006). In Chapter Six, six key themes of the meaning of sustainable tourism from the three local stakeholder groups were identified: (i) tourism that includes protection and conservation of environmental and natural resources; (ii) tourism that optimises use of regional resources; (iii) tourism with careful land-use planning (by local citizens and local tourism business people); (iv) tourism with shared economic benefits for local stakeholders; (v) tourism with focus on both natural environment and socio-cultural aspects (by local tourism business people and local authority); and (vi) tourism that can receive more tourists and increase the investment return rate (by local citizens only).

These themes reflect the three traditions of research in sustainable tourism categorised by Saarinen (2006) as presented in Table 8.1. These interpretational themes are similar to the interpretations from the studies on sustainable tourism, among which the ‘activity-based’ tradition tends to be the most popular in the tourism industry, as mentioned in Section 3.1. Nevertheless, there is an absence of carrying capacity, and the contribution of various stakeholders (particularly local communities) in decision-making about development. On the other hand, the themes ‘tourism that can receive more tourists and increase the investment return rate’ and ‘tourism with careful land-use planning’ are novel and are presented in Table 8.1 below.

‘Tourism with environmental and natural resource protection and conservation’, ‘Tourism with careful land-use planning’ and ‘Tourism with focus on both natural environment and socio-cultural aspects’ can be categorised in the ‘resource-based’ tradition, which focuses on conservation and the need to protect nature from the effects of tourist activities. In this tradition, protecting nature and local culture is the key concern, as any changes caused by tourism activities are not acceptable (Saarinen, 2006). Within the interpretation of ‘Tourism with environmental and natural resource protection and conservation’, local citizens and tourism businesspeople recognise that the tourism industry in the region depends on the quality of the natural environment, being reliant upon natural resources rather than cultural or historical sites. The sub-themes ‘Tourism with environmental and natural resource protection and conservation’, ‘Tourism with careful land-use planning’ and ‘Tourism with focus on both natural environment and socio-cultural aspects’ support the importance of preserving local capital (natural and cultural). These interpretations are similar to ‘natural resources’ in the research of Byrd *et al.* (2008, p. 200) which was also identified with ‘stakeholder understanding of natural resource protection, the value of the area’s natural resources, and the need for management of the natural resources’. Through this understanding of local stakeholders of sustainable tourism, they clearly acknowledged that natural resources are fundamental to the concept.

Traditions	Criteria of the traditions	The interpretations found in this study
‘Resource-based’ tradition	<i>‘reflects the limits of the natural or original conditions of the related resources and the need to protect nature (natural capital) and the local culture (cultural capital) from unacceptable changes caused by tourism activities’</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism with environmental and natural resource protection and conservation • Tourism with careful land-use planning • Tourism with focus on both natural environment and socio-cultural aspects
‘Activity-based’ tradition	<i>‘refers to the resource needs of the industry with respect to its present and future development, aiming to sustain the economic capital invested in tourism’</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism that optimises the usage of available resources of the region • Tourism that can receive more tourists and increase the investment return rate
‘Community-based’ tradition	<i>‘stresses the wider involvement and empowerment of various actors, especially host communities, in development, by emphasizing the elements of social capital in a local context’</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism with shared economic benefits for local stakeholders

Table 8.1: Interpretations of local stakeholders in BR-VT Province, Vietnam fitted into three traditions of sustainable tourism, according to Saarinen (2006)

‘Tourism with careful land-use planning’ in the context of sustainability may be grouped in the ‘resource-based’ tradition as it focuses upon natural resources. Local citizens and tourism businesspeople mentioned that land-use should be carefully planned and managed so that natural resources are not over-used or destroyed. Land-use planning is not only related to the use of natural resources but

is integral to economic development. It is therefore important that tourism should not negatively affect other key industries such as agriculture and forestry in the region. Within this main theme three sub-themes are identifiable: failed tourism projects; construction and development in the absence of consideration of environmental issues; and the promotion of tourist attractions without plans for renovation and conservation. The first sub-theme highlights the economic aspect of the main theme, while the rest relate to natural resources.

The sub-theme of 'Tourism with focus on both natural environment and socio-cultural aspects', which is emphasised by local tourism businesses and the local authority, recognises not only natural capital but also cultural capital for sustainable tourism in the region, which are also reflected in the 'resource-based' tradition of Saarinen (2006). Local tourism businesses and the local authority are trying to minimise the effects of tourism activities on both the natural environment and socio-cultural aspects of the region. They are trying to change the behaviour of local citizens to support the development of sustainable tourism and to change how the natural environment and local culture are being used for the development of tourism in the region. This interpretation includes two major dimensions of sustainable tourism: the natural environment and the socio-cultural.

The themes of 'Tourism that optimises the usage of available resources of the region' and 'Tourism that can receive more tourists and increase the investment return rate' can be classified in the 'activity-based' tradition. The first focuses on sustaining the economic capital invested in the industry through the available

resources in the region. Natural resources have to be used efficiently for any tourism activities, even those that are apparently abundant. This approach helps to save costs alongside sustaining the natural resources necessary for the longevity and prosperity of the tourism industry.

The interpretation ‘Receiving more tourists and increasing the investment return rate’, which was identified by only some local citizens, focuses on the growth of tourism industry in the region. Within this interpretation, emphasis is placed upon the use of regional resources to sustain the tourism industry through satisfying as many tourists as possible. This interpretation emphasises the economic sustainability of tourism industry. As stated by Saarinen (2006, p. 1129), ‘Activity-based sustainability is grounded in the idea of a dynamic, transforming tourism space, the limits on whose growth are evaluated based on the activities and their shifting needs and capacities for utilising resources in tourism’.

The sub-theme of ‘Tourism with shared economic benefits for local stakeholders’ can be classified in the ‘community-based’ tradition as it focuses on the benefits that the hosts can gain through tourism activities. This sub-theme was emphasised amongst the stakeholder groups of the local tourism businesses and the local authority. They stated that local products should be used in tourism activities to make the tourism products more unique and help the local population benefit from the industry. This statement stresses the involvement of host communities in development through the emphasis on social capital in the region (Saarinen, 2006). Community-based tourism is being developed in the region as a way to

bring more benefits to local stakeholders and conserve the craft villages and culture of the region (see Section 3.1).

(iii) Six interpretations of local stakeholders toward sustainable tourism and other existing in the literature

The six interpretations of local stakeholders of sustainable tourism presented in Section 6.1 overlap to varying degrees with the findings of other research reviewed in Section 3.1. Nonetheless, these interpretations have two main deficiencies in terms of providing a holistic interpretation of sustainable tourism. These are a lack of consideration of: (i) the long-term economic dynamic of tourism; and (ii) increasing the involvement of the local community in tourism planning and decision-making.

Economic long-term development has been mentioned in the conceptual definition of sustainable tourism established by the UNWTO (2004) and was inherent to the wider concept of sustainable development that dates back to the Brundtland Report (1987). Although local stakeholders from three different groups mentioned the importance of tourism as an economic activity, they did not mention the need to maintain the industry in the long term. They frequently discussed what needs to be developed and the issues that require tackling in the region to attract more tourists, and thus may imply that these activities may help to sustain the existence of the industry.

A common theme of sustainable tourism development is advocating for the involvement of the local community in planning and decision-making. It is argued that this is crucial for sustainable tourism at a local level, as it can help conflict resolution between stakeholders and determine locally-relevant indicators for specific management strategies. The lack of involvement of the local community in planning is a cultural reflection of planning and decision-making being top-down in Vietnam.

The difference between the findings of this research and other studies regarding the involvement of the local community in planning and decision-making could be attributed to two major factors: the difference between developed countries and developing countries; and the difference between a Republic Socialist country and other countries with different political systems. Sustainable tourism is still a new concept in a developing country like Vietnam. Whilst local people may have heard of the term, they know little about its origins or content.

8.1.2 Responses of local stakeholders to current policies that support sustainable tourism in the area

(i) Dimensions of local stakeholders' responses towards current sustainable tourism supporting policies

The findings of this research regarding local stakeholders' responses to current sustainable tourism supporting policies confirm those of other studies by arguing that responses of local stakeholders are multidimensional in nature (e.g. Dodds, 2007a; Dodds, 2007b; Dodds, 2010; Dodds & Butler, 2010; Marzuki *et al.*, 2012).

Specifically, four main dimensions of responses of local stakeholders were identified in this research: (i) these policies are not effective enough and there should be more action plans; (ii) these policies should be applied strictly; (iii) more policies should be created; and (iv) the policies should be publicised more.

The multidimensional themes found in this research regarding the responses of local stakeholders towards current policies that support sustainable tourism development in the area echo the findings of previous literature on barriers to implementing policies in sustainable tourism on a local scale in both developed and developing areas, as discussed in Section 4.3.2. The responses of local stakeholders to policy deficiencies included: ‘gaps between the policies and implementation’; a ‘lack of integration with regional and national framework and policies’; and a ‘lack of cooperation between the tourism industry and other industries in the region’. These themes reflect the findings of Dodds (2007a). In addition, recommendations for an improved implementation of the existing policies were also discussed. This included overcoming cultural limitations in developing countries to understanding of sustainable tourism due to a low level of awareness in the local community.

It is evident that local sustainable tourism policies can be ineffective if policies are not supported by the community and action plans are not developed for policy implementation. One sub-theme to emerge from the data was that there are gaps between the policies and implementation. Other sub-themes included that the policies tend to be tied too much to laws, which makes it difficult to apply them in

the region (for example, the legal penalties for social evils are not high enough to resolve these problems); there is a need for closer cooperation between tourism and other industries; and there should be a link between the policies and education for local students about protecting natural and socio-cultural capital.

Weaknesses in the local authority administration also contribute to the ineffectiveness of the policies, as the policies are not being applied strictly enough. Three possible remedies to this problem proposed by the stakeholder groups included: (i) applying higher fines or withdrawing business licenses; (ii) strictly managing the implementation stages of the policies; and (iii) publishing the addresses of businesses and other stakeholders found guilty of ignoring business laws. These subthemes support the limitation mentioned by Marzuki *et al.* (2012, p. 598) on public participation shortcomings in tourism planning: the ineffective approach. They also suggest that ‘Government officials also need to engage in more consultation with local residents about development proposals’ (*ibid.*, p. 598). Waligo *et al.* (2013, p. 343) also stress the essentialness of monitoring and managing the stakeholder involvement process as sustainable tourism implementation ‘is largely dependent upon effective stakeholder engagement’. These strategies will make policy implementation more efficient.

The creation of new policies was also suggested by the stakeholders, which will help overcome some of the common barriers that hinder the implementation of the sustainable tourism. Local stakeholders also mentioned incentive policies for businesses that focus on encouraging sustainable tourism development. With new

policies aiming to achieve sustainability in the region, more issues that halt or hinder sustainable tourism development can be better addressed, such as addressing the low-level awareness of tourists on natural environment protection and unfair or illegal competition among local tourism businesses.

The need to publicise the policies and make their content more familiar to the public was also a concern amongst stakeholders. This finding confirms the previous literature, which suggests that information regarding sustainable tourism development is often ineffectively disseminated to local stakeholders, due to unclear lines of communication (Berry & Ladkin, 1997; Dodds, 2007b). Timur and Getz (2009) mention that a significant barrier to implementing sustainable tourism at a local level is a lack of awareness of the policies, while Marzuki *et al.* (2012) stated that a lack of information regarding sustainable tourism in the region can limit community participation in the tourism development process. As many local stakeholders find the policies unfamiliar to them, the implementation process cannot be efficient.

(ii) The barriers to the implementation of current policies

Four barriers to the implementation of policies for sustainable tourism have been found in this research, as follows: (i) gaps between the policies and their implementation ('people don't see what had been done (felt more talk than action)'); (ii) the policies tend to be tied too closely to laws, which makes it difficult to apply them in the region; (iii) a lack of cooperation between the

tourism industry and other industries in the region; and (iv) no link between the policies and education.

Considering gaps between the policies and implementation, it is not just that these policies are not implemented, as described by the statement ‘people felt [the policies were] more talk than action’ as found by Dodds (2007a), but also there are problems with the non-consecutiveness of implementation of the policies. The significant challenges for tourism in the region are price scams, the pollution of nature and encroachment onto the beach by illegal businesses. To prepare for receiving tourists on public holidays including the National Day, Labour Day and other festivals, on which the region tends to receive a huge number of tourists, most of the tourism services in the region will be examined by the local authority to ensure they are following the laws and policies. However, after these peak periods of tourism, the management and implementation of policies to control these issues appears to weaken. Local tourism businesses and tourist areas seem not to be managed and controlled continuously, and this is why issues recur repeatedly.

A lack of planning for tourism, which was also identified by Dodds (2007a, 2010) is a cause of destroying natural resources unreasonably, or pursuing inefficient projects, was found in this study. The findings presented in Section 6.2.1 suggest that the implementation of those policies should be planned so that they can be efficient. Planning should be based on each region's characteristics. For the region in this study, where the family is considered to be the primary unit or ‘cell’ of

society, the policies should link with family education. Parents and grandparents have the power to make other family members follow those policies. This cultural feature can be used to drive and enable sustainable development (UNESCO, 2012). With the support of families, policies will be introduced to all the members and will be followed more closely.

Concerning the barrier created by policies being tied too closely to laws, the policies have not been well designed for the region, demonstrating a lack of integration with regional and national frameworks. The findings show that the policies tend to follow national laws and are not customised to fit regional issues. It was also found that there was a lack of communication among policy-makers, i.e. the local authority, and other local stakeholders. Unless diffused clearly to the public, policies will be unsuccessfully developed or implemented (Burstein, 2003). As a result, it is crucial for the local authority to communicate with the public for sustainable tourism policy-making (*ibid.*).

The lack of cooperation between the tourism industry and other industries in the region and the need to strengthen economic linkages between them is a further barrier. While tourism requires the support of other industries in a region to achieve sustainability, local stakeholders did not see cooperation between tourism and other industries in the region. Through coordination with other regional industries and the agreement of shared aims and objectives, policies for sustainable tourism development can be implemented more efficiently.

The last barrier to emerge from the data analysis is the lack of a link between the policies and education. Dorin-Paul (2013) found education is one of the few fields that supports sustainable tourism development, as it is the best way to inform individuals at a very early stage. Dodds (2010) and Marzuki *et al.* (2012) also found that lack of education is a barrier that hinders the implementation of sustainable tourism development on a local scale. Within this study, the findings show that education in sustainable tourism development can be carried out not only through knowledge in courses but also through the diffusion of information regarding the protection and conservation of natural and socio-cultural capital to local stakeholders to enhance their awareness of these issues.

8.1.3 The awareness and comprehension of effects of sustainable tourism development of local stakeholders

(i) Diversity of the awareness and comprehension of local stakeholders on the effects of sustainable tourism development

The awareness and comprehension shared by the stakeholders of the impacts of sustainable tourism can be placed into a framework of (i) positive environmental effects; (ii) negative environmental effects; (iii) positive economic effects; (iv) negative economic effects; (v) positive socio-cultural effects; and (vi) negative socio-cultural effects.

Within positive environmental effects, the findings presented in Section 7.1.1.1 show that sustainable tourism development is bringing environmental benefits.

These include the protection of nature; improved management of waste from tourism activities; the provision of more green areas; and the use of reusable and nature-friendly products.

Despite these positive impacts there remains a range of negative effects that still need to be overcome. The local populations remain negatively impacted through noise pollution and air pollution from tourists. The natural environment is still sometimes being polluted and destroyed by tourist activities. Finally, some natural resources have to be sacrificed for tourism businesses (see Section 3.5). Within sustainable tourism, these effects can be minimised, but not eliminated. As the region is at the early stages of sustainable tourism, these effects have not been well managed.

The results of the research suggest that the region benefits economically from sustainable tourism development in several ways. These benefits include multiplier effects such as employment creation, not only in the tourism industry directly but also indirectly in other industries, including the production of local specialties, retail and banking. Further investments are found as positive effects of sustainable tourism development in the region, in both infrastructure and human resources. Next, the encouragement of the renovation of local infrastructure with due concern for natural protection is also found. Without this enhancement, tourism in the region cannot satisfy tourists and natural protection cannot be improved. Finally, sustainable tourism development is found to bring more economic benefits to local communities. As sustainable tourism development

focuses on enhancing the quality of life of local populations, local products and community-based tourism are prioritised in tourism businesses in the region.

Despite the economic advantages brought through the pursuit of sustainable tourism, the demand for tourism remains subject to fluctuations in demand.

Problems of seasonality contribute to a low return on capital investment in the tourism industry, loss of profits due to underutilisation and the inefficient use of resources including facilities and human resources. There are also leakages caused by international investment, as mentioned by Britton (1982).

In the socio-cultural dimension, some positive effects of sustainable tourism development are found, as presented in Section 7.1.3.1. Local people benefit from improvements to infrastructure and the protection of traditional customs and festivals in the region. Furthermore, there are more opportunities for local populations to exchange culture and knowledge with tourists, to benefit both intellectually and financially. These findings support the studies of Corodeanu and Bedrule-Grigoruta (2007) and Miller *et al.* (2010) as discussed in Section 3.5.

Negative effects from sustainable tourism development on socio-cultural dimensions are also found in the region (see Section 7.1.3.2). Local people are still experiencing congestion from tourists during peak seasons and social evils are still a problem in the region. Finally, the traditional festivals in the region have become commercialised, which may change their character. These findings

confirm what have been found in the studies of Canavan (2014) and Miller *et al.* (2010) as presented in Section 3.5.

(ii) Comparing the findings with existing literature

The findings about the awareness and comprehension of effects of sustainable tourism development among local stakeholders in the studied area support the studies of Canavan (2014) and Miller *et al.* (2010), as both positive and negative effects on economic, environmental and socio-cultural dimensions were identified. Nevertheless, different specific effects may be found in this study compared to former studies.

Concerning the positive environmental effects resulting from sustainable tourism, most of the findings in this study are similar to what has been found by Canavan (2014), Corodeanu and Bedrule-Grigoruta (2007) and Miller *et al.* (2010), in that the natural environment is better protected and enhanced through better management of the waste from tourism activities, the building of more green areas and the optimal use of natural resources.

Concerning negative environmental effects, the findings of the study echo the work of Canavan (2014); Miller *et al.* (2010) and Williams and Ponsford (2009). In their research on residents' views on sustainable tourism development in Queensland, Miller *et al.* (2010, p. 18) found that local populations experience disturbance due to tourists, which 'puts the valued lifestyle of the community at risk'. In some places, tourism activities can severely affect the community

lifestyle. The findings in this study indicate that the annoyance levels of local stakeholders are at their highest during the peak tourism season, suggesting a need for the management of tourist numbers, densities and behaviour.

In economic terms, some negative effects were found in the region and competition between tourism and other regional industries such as fishery, agriculture, mining, etc. can also be an issue. This was not found in Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, Vietnam, however. A possible explanation for this is that the region relies on beaches and natural attractions such as Binh Chau hot springs and historical sites for tourism. These areas are away from the rice fields, farms etc.; moreover, tourism is one of the industry that has been established early in the region. As a result, this industry does not have much negative impact on other industries.

8.1.4 The barriers to local stakeholders participating in sustainable tourism development

The barriers that prohibit local stakeholders participating in sustainable tourism development can be classified into three major groups: (i) operational barriers, (ii) structural barriers and (iii) cultural barriers. These barriers were also found in the research of Kim *et al.* (2014), Mustapha *et al.* (2013), Saufi *et al.* (2014) and Velnisa Paimin *et al.* (2014). These studies applied the community participation barriers framework of Tosun (2000). The specific barriers to each group that were found in this study are discussed below.

Local stakeholders might not take part in sustainable tourism development in the region due to three principle operational barriers proposed by Tosun (2000).

These were a shortage of information about sustainable tourism development, lack of co-operation between local stakeholders, and governance that tends to be top-down and/or centralisation of public administration. Lack of co-operation between local stakeholders should be considered more critically as there is much conflict and unfair or illegal competition between local businesses, as in Section 7.2.1.

Within structural barriers, a lack of trained human resources and a shortage of financial resource issues were identified by local stakeholders. These are two of the seven structural barriers named by Tosun (2000). In other research, not all of the seven structural barriers by Tosun (2000) were found. In the research of Mustapha *et al.* (2013), only four structural obstacles were found: elite domination, lack of financial resources, attitude of professionals and lack of appropriate legal systems. Velnisa Paimin *et al.* (2014) only identified two structural barriers in their research: lack of capital and little control over development in their area. In the study of Saufi *et al.* (2014), only two structural barriers were identified: lack of trained human resources and lack of financial resource. Kim *et al.* (2014) found that low education levels and lack of knowledge about tourism, and poor living conditions and lack of financial support were structural barriers in their study. These studies all share a structural barrier with this study: lack of financial resources. This is because this research focuses on developing areas where tourism has not been well planned or developed.

For cultural barriers to local stakeholders participating in sustainable tourism development, it was found that local citizens had busy daily routines and lacked the time to participate in tourism. A low level of awareness in local communities was also identified by local tourism businesses and the local authority, as discussed in Section 7.2.3. Tosun (2000) suggested two cultural barriers (presented in Section 4.3.2): limited capacity of poor people, and apathy and low levels of awareness in local community, which were confirmed in the research of Mustapha *et al.* (2013) and Kim *et al.* (2014). In the study of Saufi *et al.* (2014), only lack of interest in tourism or apathy was identified.

The research studies listed above share the finding of apathy and low levels of awareness in local citizens as a barrier to participation in sustainable tourism. A possible explanation for this is that the studies focus on developing countries, as identified by Tosun (2000). As they do not have enough information about the nature of tourism development in their region, they do not behave as the industry expects them to and their participation in the development of tourism industry is limited. Local citizens thought that they had to attend meetings or training to participate in the process, and thus when they found this a barrier in the context of their busy lives and lack of information. Nonetheless, they wish to protect and maintain their surroundings, and to satisfy the tourists coming to them with their ability (e.g. providing good products, services or information to tourists), and this supports the process of sustainable tourism.

8.2 Contributions to the Literature

This study contributes to the development of knowledge in the field of local stakeholders' understanding of sustainable tourism development in a non-Western context, focusing on Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province in Vietnam. This thesis advances the literature on sustainable tourism by: (i) enriching the understandings of interpretations by local stakeholders of sustainable tourism development within a non-Western community; (ii) contributing to the emerging debate on the effects of sustainable tourism development in developing countries; and (iii) adding to the understanding of the barriers of local stakeholders in taking part in sustainable tourism development in a developing country.

8.2.1 Interpretations by local stakeholders of sustainable tourism development within a non-Western community, specifically, Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, Vietnam

Sustainable tourism development is a concept which derives from sustainable development, an evolution of the Western economic development model as a response to environmental problems in the 1970s. The findings on the interpretations on local stakeholders in this study support those identified in previous studies, in the sense that the concept can be interpreted in many ways. There were duplications of the findings among the three researched stakeholder groups. There were overlapping interpretations between the three groups: there was common ground between local citizens and local tourism businesses, and between local tourism businesses and the local authority, but no similar interpretations between local citizens and the local authority. This study suggests

that local tourism businesses and the local authority tend to interpret sustainable tourism development much as it is in the West. Their interpretations include the triple bottom line of the concept, while environmental and social issues receive more attention as these aspects can create a bad image of the region to tourists.

It was found that local citizens did not have much information about sustainable tourism development in the region. As a result, they just mentioned natural and economic aspects of sustainable tourism while discussing the concept. This was also true of some local tourism businesspeople. Thus, it can be seen that more information about sustainable tourism development policies and strategies should be provided to local citizens and local tourism businesses so that they can participate in development more thoroughly.

The results suggest that there is a big gap between people working in the industry and the others in terms of understanding and interpreting sustainable tourism development at a local level. Although local citizens have some contact with tourists in the region, their interest and knowledge of the industry and the concept of sustainable tourism can be still low. As a result, they should be included more in planning programs or policies so that they can support the development of sustainable tourism. The interest and knowledge of sustainable tourism development among local stakeholders can enhance the process, as they can discover the positive factors from the development and the benefits they can earn from it. The support of local stakeholders is crucial to the success of sustainable tourism development. If all local stakeholders acknowledge that developing

tourism can improve their living standards, they will be more likely contribute to the strategies of the region to achieve those aims.

Based on the general framework for sustainable tourism (Karas & Ferencova, 2012, cited in Janusz and Bajdor, 2013) and the Decision of the Provincial Party number 09-NQ/TU signed on 27 December 2017 (Provincial Party, 2017), a model for sustainable tourism development of the area can be generated as table 8.2 below. This model reflects the three pillars of sustainable tourism but it is specific to Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, Vietnam and, as discussed in Section 4.1, it reflects government policy and local decision. Although it focuses more on contribute to the economy of the province, it still considers the protection for natural environment and the living standards of local stakeholders. In the Decision of the Provincial Party number 09-NQ/TU, tourism is decided to be one of the leading economic sectors of the province. Thus, economic pillar is crucial to achieve the target of the province. Within this model natural resources can be used to serve tourism, but they are critically considered by Department of Environment and Resources, Department of Planning and Investment, Department of Construction and Department of Tourism. As Ba Ria-Vung Tau is famous for beach tourism, beaches tend to be exploited with resorts and tourist sites along the coastline. Besides, the mitigation of emissions of pollutants and the waste management of tourism are also considered as the result of the pollution cause by tourists. After a long period of the, this issue has been solved and is still being managed continuously. The model also pay attention to the cultural wealth of BVRT that embraces the historical, traditional and distinctive local heritage.

These features have been planned to attract more tourists to introduce them more to the public. This model also reflects the interpretations of local stakeholders towards sustainable tourism in Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, Vietnam as discussed in Chapter 6.

Table 8.2: A model for sustainable tourism development for Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, Vietnam

1. Economic capacity – encourage the economic efficiency of tourism enterprises in the region to ensure they are market competitive enough to be able to continue their activities, financially invest in further development, and make an active contribution to the economic development of the region.
2. Increase levels of local incomes and livelihood opportunities through tourism.
3. Social equity: support local citizens to be able to realize livelihood and employment opportunities within the tourism industry through capacity building
4. Ensure tourist satisfaction through maintaining a high-quality environment and cultural identity alongside services provided by the tourism industry.
5. Encourage local control of tourism development with the local government taking a lead in facilitating community involvement in the planning and decision-making, management and development of the tourism industry.
6. Maintain the cultural wealth of BVRT that embraces the historical, traditional and distinctive local heritage.
7. Implementation of environmental planning and management systems to ensure the conservation of the natural environment and avoid a loss of biodiversity and the physical and visual degradation of nature. This would include the mitigation of emissions of pollutants and the waste management of tourism.

8.2.2 The effects of sustainable tourism development in a developing country

The findings of this study challenge the idea that sustainable tourism development benefits regions without any negative side effects. Although the concept of

sustainable tourism development has been applied to many areas for more than 30 years, it was criticised that not much improvement was found in the practise of tourism generally (Section 3.5.1). While the literature is highly critical of the ambiguousness of the concept of sustainable tourism and its possible misuse, the findings of this study criticised the impacts of tourism industry.

The results showed that although tourism has certain impacts on local areas and populations as discussed in Section 7.1, it still brings many benefits to the region thus make the industry an attractive one to be developed for the benefit of the local economy, and has been chosen to be one of the means to spearhead the economy of the province. Local stakeholders don't think sustainable tourism development can completely eradicate negative impacts, but they believe that the industry can still be developed and those impacts can be minimised.

The findings also identify a threat to sustainable tourism development in the researched region due to the low level of public awareness of tourists (as opposed to local stakeholders). The industry does not earn much profit from tourists, and more labour is required to solve the problems tourists cause to natural environment. Dealing with this problem is obviously not simple for the local authority or local tourism businesses. They are gradually minimising the amount of food that tourists bring with them via publicity campaigns asking them not to do so and have strict penalties for those that pollute the areas by any means.

8.2.3 The barriers to participate in sustainable tourism development in a developing country

The findings related to the barriers to taking part in sustainable tourism development in the region echo those identified in previous research. Although the findings do not include all the barriers found in previous research, barriers from all three different groups (operational, cultural and structural barriers) were identified. However, a significant difference in the findings is the lack of cooperation between stakeholders in the region. There is not only a lack of support for others, but also conflict between local tourism businesses, for at least three reasons: the natural competition between local tourism businesses to gain more customers, the priority of local authorities for some local tourism businesses over the others, and the inefficient management of local authorities.

It was found that local tourism businesses in the region did not cooperate with each other to serve tourists, but tended to compete to win customers from each other. This competition happened in many of the service sectors of tourism industry. Restaurants and hotels tend to offer commissions for tour guides or drivers to attract more tourists to their businesses. Travel companies tell bad stories of others to make tourists confused and use only their services. As these kinds of competition can hinder sustainable tourism development in the region, they should be eliminated by more efficient management by the local authorities.

This study also found that some local tourism businesses are prioritised over others. This obstructs other tourist companies from offering services to tourists.

For instance, there is a tourist site that attracts Australian tourists, Long Tan Battlefield. At the moment, only two companies are allowed to bring tourists to the site. The others will face trouble if they try to bring tourists there as police can stop them from entering the site. It is thought that the site is politically sensitive while tourism businesspeople consider it a normal place, as it is nothing but a historical site, which is not even guarded or maintained. This not only makes cooperation between local tourism businesses difficult, but confuses tourists as to how the local area is managing tourism, which also have impacts on regional sustainable tourism development. Political issues are not easily resolved. Local authorities should have more suitable strategies to minimise those barriers.

8.2.4 Political structures in Viet Nam do facilitate sustainable tourism development:

Although Vietnam has to balance between earning GDP and protecting natural environment when developing by attracting heavy industries, sustainable tourism and sustainable development are stated in the law of the country. As could be found in Figure 4.1, the political structure in Vietnam is quite unique. For Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, the Provincial Party pays much attention on developing sustainable tourism. They want to attract more investments as well as more tourists to the area. It is not easy for sustainable tourism to be developed in a country that economy sphere is prioritises, but this is the approach of the province to attract more foreigners to the area, all of which are reflected in their Decision No. 09-NQ/TU signed on December 27th, 2017. Currently, Department of Tourism is working on the Action Program based on Decision No. 09-NQ/TU to

carry out the policies for sustainable tourism development as well as making tourism a leading economic sector of the province.

The local government tackle intra-generational equity and livelihood opportunities creation through the development of sustainable tourism. They want to create more tourism jobs with high salary for high quality human resources. They pay much attention on environment protection and facilitate environmental management. They support the three pillars of sustainable tourism by considering current activities and investments in the province to make sure that all of them facilitate sustainable tourism. For external factors, for example, neo-liberalism that may be impact on STD in the province, the local authority is willing to coordinate with international organisations to boost the development of sustainable tourism as well as support the province in attracting more foreign investment, which has been stated in Decision No. 09-NQ/TU. As discussed in Section 4.2.1, Halong Bay receives the interests of The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) on supporting the area to develop sustainable tourism. Local governments in Vietnam tend to be willing to receive the supports of international organisations.

8.3 Limitations of the Study

There are limitations to the study, which may be classified into five groups: (i) generalisation of the research findings; (ii) the study participants; (iii)

epistemology; (iv) data collection methods; and (v) feedback from member-checking, discussed below.

8.3.1 Generalisation of the research findings

This is the first limitation of this study. As this study does not aim to generalise its findings, an interpretive paradigm is utilised, using qualitative research methods as discussed in Chapter Five. Only one case study is used, with findings derived from a small number of respondents. Furthermore, this study is mainly based on the researcher's understanding and interpretations of the findings from local stakeholders, from three main groups (local citizens, local tourism businesses and the local authority), on their interpretation of sustainable tourism development in the researched area. The findings subsequently reflect the unique characteristics of the sustainable tourism development in Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province and cannot be generalised to local stakeholders in other geographical areas. Nevertheless, thick description of the study's context and setting are provided to ensure that the study is rigorous, and that the findings are transferable to other studies in similar contexts.

8.3.2 The participants of the study

Four limitations associated with the participants of the study are identified. The group of local citizens is biased towards citizens in the age range of thirty to fifty years, which does not cover the full ages ranges of the local populations, and therefore the findings may have limited applicability to other age groups.

Secondly, whilst the participants in the stakeholder group of local tourism businesses are diverse in covering travel companies, hotels and restaurants, it does not provide holistic coverage of all the service sectors of the tourism industry in the region, which also include transportation services, adventure tourism and recreation, events and conferences, and other tourism services.

The next limitation in this group is that participants from the local authority are limited, as many of them are not allowed to take part in the study. Only one participant from this group was approached due to the policy of the local authority. This person spoke on behalf of the local government on tourism issues within the province. As a result, new themes or interpretations from others in this stakeholder group can be ignored, which may lead to inaccuracy in the findings.

It was not easy to access participants of this study. The researcher had to use relationships with family and friends to approach them. Local citizens were the easiest to approach, while the local authority was most difficult. Overcoming this difficulty took more time than expected, and also may reduce the quality of the findings and limit a thorough understanding of the interpretations of local stakeholders on sustainable tourism development in the region.

8.3.5 Feedback from member-checking limitations

Member-checking (Creswell, 2009) was used to ensure the validity of the data obtained from the participants. Nonetheless, at first, the rate of response from the local citizens was not high, while the other two groups replied to all the emails.

After taking part in the interviews for the study, local stakeholders tended not to meet the researcher for personal reasons. The researcher tried to email them and waited for two months after resending them the summary of the main themes up to three times. Eventually the researcher called them in person and received most of the information needed with one citizen still did not reply.

8.4 Suggestions for the future of Sustainable Tourism Development of Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, Vietnam

Based on the results of the data collection, several recommendations may be made to improve the approach to sustainable tourism development. These recommendations can also be applied to other areas that have similar context to this region. The recommendations are:

- (i) To improve the quality of human resources in order to increase the number of high-quality jobs supporting the tourism industry in the region. Human resources were considered one of the barriers to local stakeholders taking part in sustainable tourism development. There should be more training workshops and more conferences to equip the local human resources with skills and knowledge. Foreign languages (English, Japanese, Russia, etc.) training should also be considered for the staff. The number of foreign tourists in the region is not high, but is expected to increase. As a result, human resources should be able to use foreign languages well to serve international tourists and remind them to respect the local natural environment, culture and society.

(ii) There should be more investment in community-based tourism in the region to ensure fair distribution of profits from tourism. As one of the most important goals of sustainable tourism development is the improvement of quality of life for local populations, they should be supported to gain as many benefits from tourism industry in the region as possible. This goal addresses intra-generational equity mentioned by the Brundtland Report. Sustainable development is not just about inter-, but also intra-generational equity, an aspect overlooked in most studies. Currently there are some community-based tourism sites in the region, but they should be invested in more, in terms of quality and capacity to satisfy the triple bottom line of sustainable tourism. These sites also need more interest from the local authority to make sure they can be developed sustainably. Such investment may not only increase job opportunities in the region, but also create more unique tourism products to attract more tourists to the region. The population in the surrounding areas is high and the demands for tourism services are also rising. Suitable planning strategies can bring more benefit to locals.

(iii) Centralisation of public administration is also considered as a barrier for sustainable tourism development at local level. As a result, there should be some mechanisms to increase the involvement of local community in planning and decision-making, management and development of the tourism industry. The local authority should work

more closely with local tourism businesses and pay more attention to the feedback and information from local citizens. Thus, more suitable solutions and actions can be implemented and locals will become more willing to support sustainable tourism development in the region. Besides, several studies show that it is very difficult for local communities to benefit from tourism development if local stakeholders do not participate in the decision-making process.

(iv) Coordination between stakeholders should be enhanced. Local stakeholders found that the lack of coordination between stakeholders hindered them from taking part in the sustainable tourism development. This barrier can be overcome by the support of local authorities, especially the Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism and Ba Ria-Vung Tau Tourism Association. They can work together and connect other stakeholders in the region to make sure that each stakeholder is willing to support the others to stimulate the development of tourism sustainably. Any issues or benefit conflicts should be seriously considered and overcome so that those do not impact the development of tourism in the region. As barriers and development are inversely related to each other, it is necessary to eliminate or minimise these barriers so that sustainable tourism can be well developed and more local people can get involved in (and benefit from) tourism activities. Local government authorities have to play the major role in reducing the barriers identified by involving locals in the tourism development processes and proactively supporting the

participations of all local stakeholders. They also should raise awareness among local stakeholders of the potential benefits of participation in tourism-related activities.

(v) When approving or building any regional infrastructure for tourism, the local authority must consider the physical attractiveness of the region, in both urban and rural areas. In particular, physical or visual degradation of the environment must be avoided. Natural resources have to be used efficiently to minimise the impacts of tourism on natural environment and on other regional industries such as agriculture and fishing in the future.

(vi) Information regarding sustainable tourism development of the region should be more publicised to local populations. Without clear information, barriers to local people participating in the process of sustainable tourism development can be created. There should also be some incentives for stimulating local populations to take part in the process, such as merit certificates, merit awards, etc. More serious penalties should also be created, rather than propaganda, which was found ineffective in most areas of the province.

(vii) Local authorities should call for more investment in natural environment protection, such as waste-processing systems or pollution treatment and better manage local businesses to prevent pollution. Currently, the waste in the region has not been well treated and may

pollute the environment. The beaches and rivers were found to have been negatively affected by the partially treated waste and the environment can be severely impacted without a quick response from local authorities to the problem.

(viii) Cleaning the environment should be done continuously by local stakeholders in the tourism industry and other local people. Waste management is still a big problem for tourist sites in the region, especially the beaches during weekends or holidays. Local populations should keep their areas clean and tidy, motivated by incentives or penalties. If their areas are clean for a certain period of time, they should receive merit certificate which can be given to each family in quarterly meeting of citizen groups; if not, they will be warned or fined. Each family and school should advise their members or students to take care of their natural environment or they will be negatively affected. Tourists with low level of public awareness must be fined as they are the ones that pollute the sites. The waste generated by tourists can be reduced by using recycled bags and products made of eco-friendly materials.

(ix) Unique tourism products and services should be created. Currently, tourism in the region focuses on beach tourism, which is similar to many other tourism locations on the long coast of Vietnam. As a result, it is difficult to compete with those with better facilities or marketing strategies. Tourism products in the region should use the unique features

of each destination to create new tourism products. The new products and services should also ensure environmental conservation and respect the socio-cultural aspects of the region.

The above recommendations are mainly based on the barriers that make local stakeholders reluctant or unable to support or take part in sustainable tourism development as well as some negative effects that need to be resolved.

Sustainable tourism development in the region is still in its infancy, with few efficient policies. The local authority should pay more attention to current issues identified above and work more closely with other local stakeholders to produce suitable strategies to develop sustainable tourism in the region.

8.5 Suggestions for future research

Sustainable tourism is widely accepted and incorporated into policies and strategies for many destinations. Nonetheless, the number of studies of sustainable tourism in developing countries is still limited. This study introduces some opportunities for future research into sustainable tourism in developing countries, which can be categorised below.

8.5.1 Tourists and sustainable tourism development at local level

The current study focuses on interpretations of local stakeholders of sustainable development at a local level in a developing country. Although these stakeholders affect and are affected by the development of sustainable tourism greatly, they are not the only people that can determine the success of the processes. At local level,

tourists can also have a great effect on the development of sustainable tourism at destinations. As a result, to achieve sustainable tourism in the region, studies on the attitudes of tourists to destinations and their impact on the processes of sustainable tourism at local level are needed.

Furthermore, as tourists are one of the main groups that can determine the success of sustainable tourism in the role of consumers, their demands and requirements for this type of tourism development should also be investigated. As this type of tourism development may restrict or minimise some kinds of tourism activities that may negatively impact local areas, tourists interested in those tourism activities can react to the development and may slow down the process of sustainable tourism approach.

8.5.2 Barriers to involvement and participation in sustainable tourism development at a local level

Within the current study, a number of barriers to participation in sustainable tourism development were identified. These barriers hinder the development of sustainable tourism in the region as local stakeholders could not support the process. Nevertheless, this is not the main topic being investigated by this study. Each group of local stakeholders encounters different kinds of barriers and more research on the barriers to their participation is needed to find out more about this issue in the development of sustainable tourism at a local level.

Involvement of local stakeholders in sustainable tourism is considered critically in the literature. This issue, which can support the participation of local stakeholders if it is implemented well, has not been addressed in the current study.

Consequently, research on barriers to the involvement of local stakeholders in sustainable tourism in developing countries can be carried out to enhance understanding of sustainable tourism.

8.6 Understandings of tourism and sustainable development in Vietnam and Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province

As a developing country, Vietnam is vibrant in developing in many different industries, among which, tourism is considered as a key sector as it brings lots of economic benefits to the country. After a long time of development in the industry, Vietnam in general and Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province as a specific destination of this research gain more knowledge about tourism and sustainable development and begin to act actively to achieve sustainable tourism development. An obvious start for this is the Decision No. 09-NQ/TU which has been announced on 27th December 2017 by the Provincial Party Committee and followed by many programs and projects such as: the Action program of the Provincial People's Committee to implement the Decision No. 09-NQ/TU; the project to protect the natural environment while developing tourism in the province; the project to protect the coast while developing tourism; the project to ensure the security for tourists and local community; the project to support local people to benefit from tourism activities and so on. The leaders of the area really care about sustainable tourism development and they keep inspiring local community to ensure sustainable development is well supported by tourism, a key

economic sector of the province. Many different Departments such Department of Tourism, Department of Culture and Sport, Department of Planning and investment, Department of Agriculture, Provincial Military and so on are willing to sit together and find the solutions for sustainable tourism development. Most of the local people are willing to support the projects and policies of local government as they recognise the importance and benefits that those can bring to them in the long term development.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Tourist areas of Baria-Vungtau Province



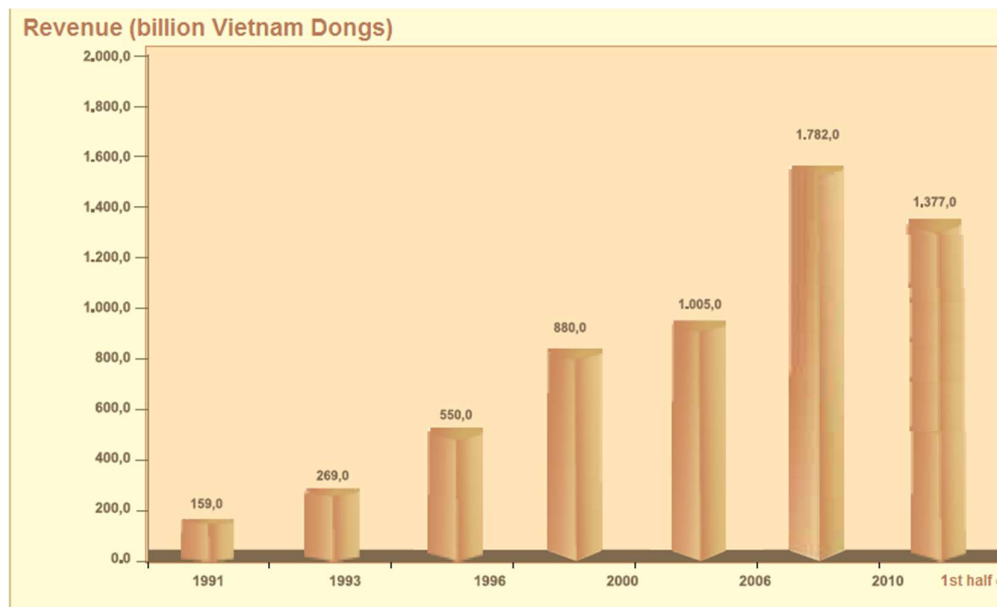
Source: Official Website of Baria-Vungtau Province. Available at:

http://www.baria-vungtau.gov.vn/Bando_QH/vua/DULICH.jpg

(accessed on 31th August 2012)

Appendix 2

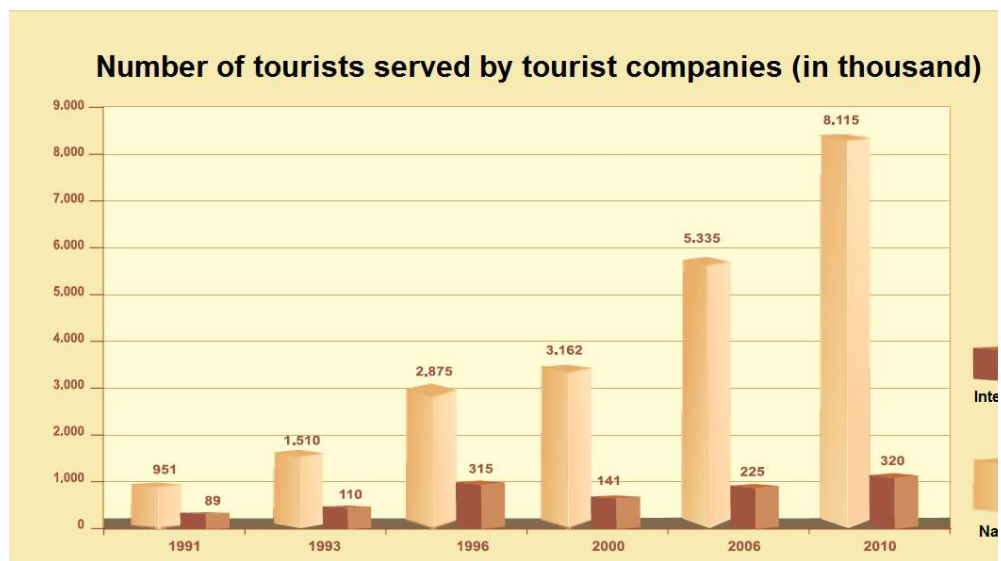
Revenue from tourism



Revenue from tourism (Baria-Vungtau Province Department of Culture, Sport and Tourism, 2011b, p.66)

Appendix 3

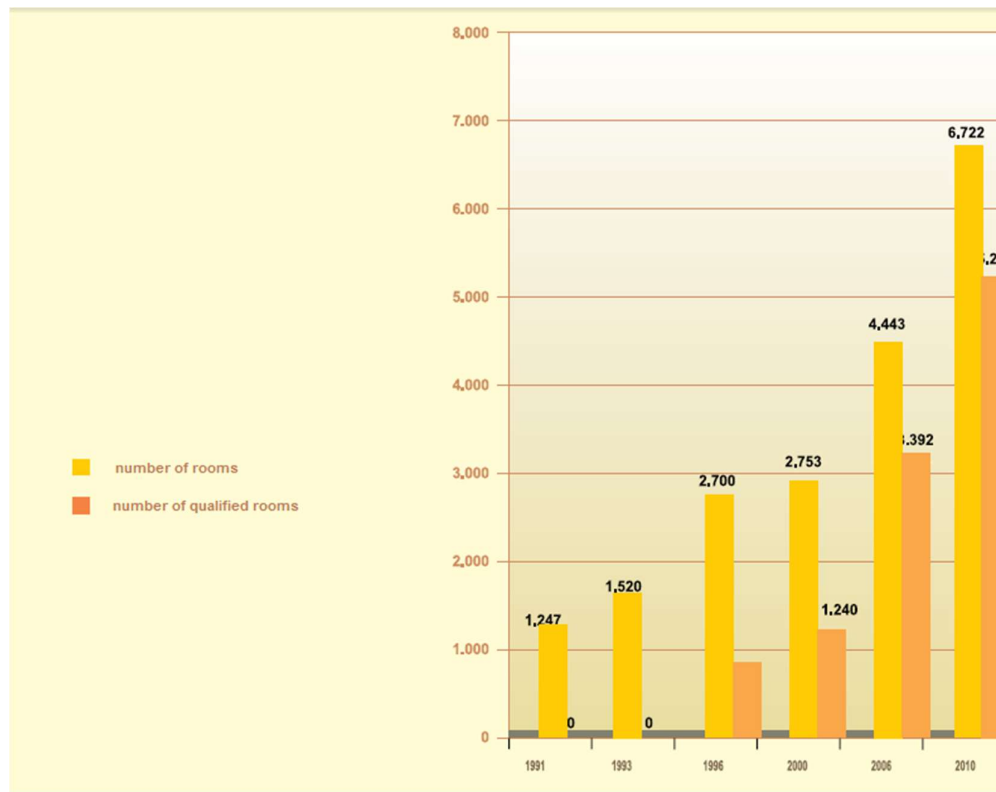
Number of tourists served by tourist companies



Number of tourists served by tourist companies (Baria-Vungtau Province Department of Culture, Sport and Tourism, 2011b, p.67)

Appendix 4

Number of rooms for tourists



Number of rooms for tourists (Baria-Vungtau Province Department of Culture, Sport and Tourism, 2011b, p.67)

Appendix 5

Research Ethics Scrutiny

SECTION A To be completed by the candidate

Registration No: 1135483
Candidate: Minh Duc Le
Research Institute: Institute of Tourism Research (INTOUR)
Research Topic: Developing Sustainable Tourism: A critical evaluation of interpretations of local stakeholders in Baria-Vungtau, Vietnam
External Funding: Baria-Vungtau Province, Vietnam

The candidate is required to summarise in the box below the ethical issues involved in the research proposal and how they will be addressed. In any proposal involving human participants the following should be provided:

- clear explanation of how informed consent will be obtained,
- how will confidentiality and anonymity be observed,
- how will the nature of the research, its purpose and the means of dissemination of the outcomes be communicated to participants,
- how personal data will be stored and secured
- if participants are being placed under any form of stress (physical or mental) identify what steps are being taken to minimise risk

If protocols are being used that have already received University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) ethical approval, then please specify. Roles of any collaborating institutions should be clearly identified. Reference should be made to the appropriate professional body code of practice.

The below ethical issues will be assured for the all participants of the study:

- Participants will be ensured that their participations are completely voluntary and they can withdraw freely from the research at any time they want
- Interview schedule will be informed to all participants in advance
- Participants are informed that they can refuse any questions they don't want to answer
- Audio recording will be used to collect data. Participants will be well informed about this, and they are free to request that taping to be terminated at any time
- Participants will be informed that they will be able to review the recordings and they can ask particular parts related to their information to be deleted.
- Anonymity and confidentiality will be ensured by using only pseudonyms or coded in any written and/or oral presentations;
- Personal data will be stored carefully with backups and password protected.

Answer the following question by deleting as appropriate:

1. Does the study involve vulnerable participants or those unable to give informed consent (e.g. children, people with learning disabilities, your own students)?
~~Yes~~ No
2. Will the study require permission of a gatekeeper for access to participants (e.g. schools, self-help groups, residential homes)?
~~Yes~~ No
3. Will it be necessary for participants to be involved without consent (e.g. covert observation in non-public places)?
~~Yes~~ No
4. Will the study involve sensitive topics (e.g. sexual activity, substance abuse)?
~~Yes~~ No
5. Will blood or tissue samples be taken from participants?
~~Yes~~ No

6. Will the research involve intrusive interventions (e.g. drugs, hypnosis, physical exercise)? ~~Yes~~ No
7. Will financial or other inducements be offered to participants (except reasonable expenses)? ~~Yes~~ No
8. Will the research investigate any aspect of illegal activity? ~~Yes~~ No
9. Will participants be stressed beyond what is normal for them? ~~Yes~~ No
10. Will the study involve participants from the NHS (e.g. patients or staff)? ~~Yes*~~ No

If you have answered yes to any of the above questions or if you consider that there are other significant ethical issues, then details should be included in your summary above. If you have answered yes to Question 1 then a clear justification for the importance of the research must be provided.

*Please note if the answer to Question 10 is yes then the proposal should be submitted through **NHS research ethics approval procedures** to the appropriate **COREC**. The UREC should be informed of the outcome.

Checklist of documents which should be included:

Project proposal (with details of methodology) & source of funding	
Documentation seeking informed consent (if appropriate)	
Information sheet for participants (if appropriate)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Questionnaire (if appropriate)	

(Tick as appropriate)

Signature of Applicant: *Minh Duc Le*

Date: *05 October 2012*

Signature of Director of Studies: *A. Holden*

Date: 09 October 2012

This form together with a copy of the research proposal should be submitted to the Research Institute Director for consideration by the Research Institute Ethics Committee/Panel

Note you cannot commence collection of research data until this form has been approved

Appendix 6

Research Information Sheet



Institute for Tourism
Research
Park Square Luton
Bedfordshire
United Kingdom
LU1 3JU
www.beds.ac.uk

Research Information Sheet

You are being invited to participate in a research study entitled

Sustainable tourism development: a critical evaluation of interpretations of local stakeholders in Baria-Vungtau Province, Vietnam

This research is part of my PhD dissertation at the Institute for Tourism Research (INTOUR), University of Bedfordshire, United Kingdom. The aim of the research is to critically evaluate the interpretations of sustainable tourism held by local stakeholders in Baria-Vungtau Province, Vietnam. It is conducted at two sites, Longhai and Vungtau City.

You are invited to participate in this study because you are living in the studied site and have regular contacts with tourists as well as you are interested in the development of tourism in the region. There is no known risk for you to decide to participate in this study. The information you provide will help me understand the interpretations of sustainable tourism by the local stakeholders, the response of local stakeholders to current policies that support sustainable tourism in the area, evaluate the awareness and comprehension of stakeholders of the positive and negative effects of sustainable tourism development, and comprehend the barriers encountered by local stakeholders to their participation in sustainable tourism development.

Your participation in this study will involve a 45-60 minute individual interview asking questions related to sustainable tourism in Baria-Vungtau Province. This conversation will be recorded only with your permission. During the interview, your demographic characteristics will be collected for further data research.

Your participation in this study is voluntary; therefore, should you feel the need to withdraw from the study, you may do so without question at any time until 30th November 2013. If you do withdraw at any stage, any information you have provided will be destroyed. You can also refuse to answer to any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. The results of the study may be published. However, you are assured of the complete anonymity and confidentiality of your information, since only pseudonyms will be used in any written and/or oral presentations. All material collected will be kept confidential. No other person besides my Director of Study and supervisors and I will have access to your data. The dissertation will be submitted to the University of Bedfordshire and deposited in the University Library and the British Library. It is intended that one or more articles will be submitted for publication in scholarly journals. Interview transcriptions will be destroyed two years after the end of the project. If you agree to participate, please sign a consent form to acknowledge your voluntary participation in the study.

I will be very pleased to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about your participation or your rights in this study. You may contact me at Minh.Le@beds.ac.uk or at 0084 (0)977267755.

Minh Duc Le

PhD student, Institute for Tourism Research, University of Bedfordshire.

Appendix 7
Consent Form



Institute for Tourism
Research
Park Square Luton
Bedfordshire
United Kingdom
LU1 3JU
www.beds.ac.uk

CONSENT FORM

**Sustainable tourism development: a critical evaluation of interpretations of
local stakeholders in Baria-Vungtau Province, Vietnam**

Researcher's information

Minh Duc Le

PhD student, the Institute for Tourism Research, the University of Bedfordshire

Contact details: Minh.Le@beds.ac.uk or at 0084 (0)977267755.

Participant Reference Number:

Please tick box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand
the information sheet for the above study
and have had the opportunity to ask
questions and have had these answered
satisfactorily.

☐

2. I understand that my participation is
voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at
any time, without giving reason.

☐

3. I agree to take part in this study.

☐

	Please tick box	
	Yes	No
4. I agree to the interview / focus group being audio recorded	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I agree to the interview / focus group being video recorded	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I agree to the diary on volunteer tourism experiences being read by the researcher and her supervisory team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I agree to the interview/focus group/diary being used as data for this research study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I agree that my data gathered in this study may be stored (after it has been anonymised) and may be used for future research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Date	Signature
 <u>Minh Duc Le</u>	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

Appendix 8

Full demographic details of local stakeholders and information about interviews

No.	Name	Gender	Age	Marital status	Education	Occupation	Interview Date	Interview duration
1	C01	M	32	Single	BA	Officer	02/12/2013	45 mins
2	C02	F	30	Single	BA	Shop assistant	02/12/2013	40 mins
3	C03	F	31	Single	BA	Officer	03/12/2013	50 mins
4	C04	F	33	Married	BA	Teacher	03/12/2013	55 mins
5	C05	M	35	Single	BA	Officer	04/12/2013	52 mins
6	C06	M	34	Married	BA	Officer	05/12/2013	46 mins
7	C07	M	33	Married	BA	Officer	09/12/2013	41 mins
8	C08	M	33	Married	BA	Officer	15/12/2013	56 mins
9	C09	M	45	Married	BA	Officer	18/12/2013	50 mins
10	C10	M	45	Married	BA	Officer	20/12/2013	46 mins
11	C11	M	49	Married	BA	Officer	25/12/2013	35 mins
12	C12	F	34	Married	BA	Officer	28/12/2013	34 mins
13	C13	M	30	Married	BA	Sales Man	30/12/2013	32 mins
14	C14	F	31	Single	BA	Officer	05/01/2014	40 mins
15	C15	M	32	Married	BA	Officer	06/01/2014	39 mins
16	C16	M	31	Married	BA	Teacher	06/01/2014	33 mins
17	C17	M	32	Single	BA	Officer	08/01/2014	43 mins
18	C18	M	34	Single	BA	Officer	10/01/2014	50 mins
19	C19	F	32	Married	BA	Sales Woman	11/01/2014	35 mins
20	C20	M	34	Single	BA	Officer	12/01/2014	32 mins
21	C21	M	43	Married	BA	Officer	15/01/2014	46 mins
22	C22	M	42	Single	BA	Officer	20/01/2014	34 mins
23	C23	M	45	Married	BA	Officer	23/01/2014	36 mins
24	C24	F	31	Single	BA	Shop assistant	24/01/2014	45 mins

25	C25	M	32	Single	BA	Sales Man	26/01/2014	32 mins
26	C26	F	30	Married	BA	Officer		38 mins
27	C27	M	31	Single	BA	Officer	28/01/2014	50 mins
28	C28	M	30	Single	BA	Officer	28/01/2014	55 mins
29	C29	F	31	Married	BA	Officer	30/01/2014	54 mins
30	B01	M	32	Single	BA	Hotel Manager	02/02/2014	60 mins
31	B02	F	31	Married	BA	Travel Agent Manager	10/02/2014	55 mins
32	B03	M	35	Single	MA	Restaurant Manager	20/02/2014	1h 15 mins
33	B04	F	40	Married	MA	Hotel Manager	26/02/2014	60 mins
34	B05	M	49	Married	MA	Hotel Manager	05/03/2014	1h 35 mins
35	B06	M	50	Married	MA	Travel Agent Manager	08/03/2014	2h 15 mins
36	B07	M	32	Single	BA	Restaurant Manager	12/03/2014	55 mins
37	B08	F	33	Married	MA	Hotel Manager	15/03/2014	1h 16 mins
38	B09	M	31	Single	BA	Hotel Manager	20/03/2014	50 mins
39	B10	M	34	Married	BA	Travel Agent Manager	25/03/2014	40 mins
40	A01	M	48	Married	BA	Local Authority	05/03/2014	55 mins

Note

1. Name: C01 = Citizen 01; B01 = Business person 01; A01 = Local authority 01
2. Gender: M = Male; F = Female
3. Education: BA = Bachelor of Art; MA = Master of Art

Appendix 9

Semi-structured interview questions

- **Identify the interpretations of sustainable tourism by the local stakeholders**
 1. Have you ever heard about sustainable tourism? In your opinion, how should the tourism in our area be developed so that it can be sustainable?
 2. What are the strengths of our area that can be used to develop tourism sustainably?
 3. What can sustainable tourism do to protect the natural environment?
 4. What can sustainable tourism do to enhance the economy of local stakeholders?
 5. What can sustainable tourism do to protect the society and conserve the culture in the region?
- **Critically evaluate the response of local stakeholders to current policies that support sustainable tourism in the area**
 6. What are the policies supporting the sustainable tourism development in the area?
 7. Where did you get the info about these policies?
 8. In which ways should these policies be brought to the stakeholders in the area (mass media, newspaper, notice board, ...)?
 9. How are they being implemented?
 10. What are your suggestions to make these policies more suitable and applicable?
- **Evaluate the awareness and comprehension of stakeholders of the positive and negative effects of sustainable tourism development**
 11. What are the positive and negative effects that you are experiencing from tourism in the region in terms of environment?
 12. What are the positive and negative effects that you are experiencing from tourism in the region in terms of economy?
 13. What are the positive and negative effects that you are experiencing from tourism in the region in terms of society and culture?

- **Comprehend the barriers encountered by local stakeholders to their participation in sustainable tourism development**

14. In which ways do you think you can participate in sustainable tourism development in the area?
15. What may prevent you from participating in sustainable tourism development in the area?
16. What should be done to support your participating in sustainable tourism development in the area?
17. Who should participate in sustainable tourism development in the area and why?

Appendix 10

Sample interview transcript from the main study

Extract from an interview with B04

- **Identify the interpretations of sustainable tourism by the local stakeholders**

1. Have you ever heard about sustainable tourism? In your opinion, how should the tourism in our area be developed so that it can be sustainable?

Yes! Sustainable tourism is the development of tourism that focuses on the right target and with long term strategies, based on the strengths of the region, assuring to conserve natural environment as well as social-cultural aspects of the region and the benefits of local citizens.

We should focus on protecting natural environment, especially at the beaches. As we can recognise, tourists are very unconscious about what they are causing to the beaches. After their visit, they leave lots of rubbish on the beaches. Besides, we can use our local products such as rice wine, rice paper, noodle, etc. to promote the uniqueness of the region as well as support local citizens to earn more benefits from tourism in the region. We can bring tourists to craft villages so that they can enjoy the local products and learn how they are made.

2. What are the strengths of our area that can be used to develop tourism sustainably?

We are located near Ho Chi Minh City, 1.5hour away, a city with high population density. We have good weather with sunlight all year round. We have tourism resources such as hot springs, big projects with resorts and casino, dog racing, Con Dao Island, beaches, primitive forest. Besides, tourism is considered to be a major sector of economy of the region with many plans and private businesses are willing to develop the industry.

3. What can sustainable tourism do to protect the environment?

Tourism companies and local authorities can better protect the environment by offering more waste bins in the areas of their businesses. Local people and tourists should be propagandised about the important of natural environment

and they should be motivated to protect the natural environment. Local authorities should supervise the quality of natural environment in the region, especially at crowding tourist sites. Everybody has to act simultaneously then natural environment can be protected.

4. What can sustainable tourism do to enhance the economy of local stakeholders?

Sustainable tourism can help to optimise the use of the available resources in the region. We have long and beautiful beaches. Besides, we have some historical sites, primitive forests, craft villages, hot springs. However, these sites are not interesting enough to attract more tourists as they have not been invested in and there are some similar attractions around the region. Most of the tourists coming to the area are domestic tourists. The region has not been an attractive site for international tourists. With sustainable tourism approach, we have to invest more in other attractions beside the beaches to attract more domestic as well as international tourists.

5. What can sustainable tourism do to protect the society and conserve the culture in the region?

With sustainable tourism approach, the culture can be well preserved to introduce to tourists. The socio-cultural aspect will be considered more. To approach sustainable tourism in the region, social evils like thieves, drugs and prostitution have to be minimised, then eliminated. As a result, the society can be better protected and the culture in the region can be better conserved.

- **Critically evaluate the response of local stakeholders to current policies that support sustainable tourism in the area**

6. What are the policies supporting the sustainable tourism development in the area?

We have resolutions of People's Committee of the Province and acting programs such as 'trusted tourism addresses', 'tourist supporting centre', 'Green Lotus Label', and so on.

7. What are your suggestions to make these policies more suitable and applicable?

I think the Government should allow the province to act accordingly to the situations of the area as the laws and policies cannot be applied the same for everywhere. All the Department within the region should work together to support the implementations of these policies. Other sectors in the region should consider tourism as a major sector in the region and all should support the industry to develop well.

8. Where did you get the info about these policies?

We received the information from the Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism. You can also find them on the internet.

9. In which ways should these policies be brought to the stakeholders in the area (mass media, newspaper, notice board, ...)?

I think all local stakeholders should know about these policies. As a result, this information should be on local newspapers, local TV news

10. How are they being implemented?

At the first stage, these policies tend to be implemented well and receive very good results with the support of many local stakeholders. However, after that, the local authorities and local tourism businesses tend to ‘forget’ the implementations of these policies. They do not supervise and recheck the implementations, thus the problems can occur again. For example, the price scam is very popular to tourists when talking about Vungtau City. Although local authorities have tried many times to stop it, the issue reoccurs many times and creates bad image of the city. This failure also shows that there is a need for the continuous cooperation among local stakeholders.

- **Evaluate the awareness and comprehension of stakeholders of the positive and negative effects of sustainable tourism development**

11. What are the positive and negative effects that you can get from sustainable tourism development in terms of environment?

Although tourism industry destroys the natural resources and pollute the environment with liquid and solid waste, recently the natural environment has been better protected. There are campaigns to protect the natural environment at tourist sites and more waste bins have been install along the beaches and at tourist sites. More green trees are planted and there are more staffs to collect

waste than before. Although the region tries its best to protect the natural environment to approach sustainable tourism, these issues cannot be got rid of. Noise pollution and air pollution are part of the results of tourists coming to the area and we have not been able to reduce them. These effects just happen at weekends, holidays or during special events such as traditional and international festivals in the area. We have to overcome this for the development of tourism in the region until there is new strategy that can make the industry less seasonal.

12. What are the positive and negative effects that you can get from sustainable tourism development in terms of economy?

Tourism create jobs and bring many economic benefits to the region. It promotes the image of the region, and attracts more investments. Besides, it also brings foreign currency to the region. It is very important that sustainable tourism can encourage the use of local product and local services rather than the imported one. This support can enhance the living standards of the local community and reduce the money leakage caused by conventional tourism. The benefits from tourism thus are shared more to the local community and make them more eager to develop the industry in the region. This will make them do their best to serve tourists and satisfy them to encourage their return and recommendation.

For negative effects, as sustainable tourism is still tourism, it is still affected by many other industries as well as events such as natural disasters and economic recession. As it is so vulnerable, it can negatively affect the economy of the region. We have experienced two serious periods of negative effects in 2006 when a storm hit the region and in 2008 when the world was hit by a great recession. This is the problem that sustainable tourism cannot overcome till now.

13. What are the positive and negative effects that you are experiencing from tourism in the region in terms of society and culture?

We have better infrastructure. The culture and traditions are conserved better as traditional festivals are organised annually and attract lots of tourists. But we still experience traffic jam, scams, and social evils at public areas. Tourism is still causing both negative and positive effects to the society in the region.

- **Comprehend the barriers encountered by local stakeholders to their participation in sustainable tourism development**

14. In which ways do you think you can participate in sustainable tourism development in the area?

We are focusing on attracting tourists who stay long time, more than 2 nights and international tourists. We can work with the local state to create program to develop sustainable tourism, create new products, adjust unsuitable plans, and support other companies to manage tourism.

15. What may prevent you from participating in sustainable tourism development in the area?

We are facing the problem of human resources and capital to renovate our hotel. We are still recruiting more staffs with high quality skills and knowledge to serve tourists but it is not easy as not many staff can communicate in English well enough. We are also trying to find low rate loans to renew our infrastructure.

16. What should be done to support your participating in sustainable tourism development in the area?

The state should support us in loans with low interest rate to invest in renovations and facilities which cost much. They also should have more conferences to inform the tourism business about the necessity of protecting the environment and saving natural resources to develop tourism sustainably.

17. Who should participate in sustainable tourism development in the area and why?

Beside the local government and local businesses, the local citizens should be the one that take part in ST. Local authorities act as the leaders with the policies and the implementations of these policies. Local tourism businesses are the one that contact and serves tourists directly. Local citizens can engage in tourism industry by keeping their natural and social environment safe and

healthy. Their friendliness and kindness to tourists are also crucial for tourism in the region to be developed. Each group has their own roles in the development of sustainable tourism and if one of them do not contribute, sustainable tourism cannot be approached.

Appendix 11

Summary of thematic analysis process

Phases	Description of the process
1. Familiarising with the data	Transcribing data; read through the entire data; repeatedly reading the data; searching for meaning and patterns; taking notes; and marking ideas for initial coding
2. Generating initial codes	Identifying codes; matching the codes with data extracts that demonstrate those codes; and collating relevant data extracts together within each code in separate computer files or file cards
3. Searching for themes	Reviewing all the identified codes and sorting them into potential themes; and collating all the relevant data extracts to each potential theme in separate computer files or file cards
4. Reviewing themes	read all the collated extracts for each theme, and consider whether they appear to form a coherent pattern. If the candidate themes appear to form a coherent pattern, then move on to the second level of this phase, unless, consider whether the theme itself is problematic, or whether some of the data extracts within it simply do not fit there then rework the theme to create a new theme. Now consider the validity of individual themes in relation to the data set, but also whether the candidate thematic map 'accurately' reflects the meanings evident in the data set as a whole.
5. Defining and naming themes	Identifying the 'essence' of each theme or what 'story' it tells; generating sub-themes and sub subthemes to give structure to a large theme; organising collated data extracts for each theme to form a coherent and internally consistent account of story that reflects that particular theme; and considering and giving names to the themes.
6. Producing the report	Writing-up the report with data extracts embedded within an analytic narrative and an argument in relation to the research question.

(Source: Braun & Clarke, 2006)